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New York

President: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 14 *(continued)*

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Agency (A/52/285)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.13)

Mr. Kolos (Belarus): Having examined the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the delegation of Belarus notes with satisfaction the high professional level of its preparation. We thank Mr. Hans Blix for the submission of the report to the General Assembly and commend his performance in his post, to which he has devoted 16 years of his life. Our delegation associates his name with the impressive authority the Agency has acquired in the international community. I also want to extend our best wishes to Mr. ElBaradei, the incoming Director General, and pledge our support to him.

In the 40 years of its existence, the IAEA has made a considerable contribution towards strengthening security and the prevention of nuclear-weapons proliferation. We attach special importance to this area of the Agency's activities. In strict compliance with the principles of non-proliferation, Belarus ratified the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear-weapon State, signed a safeguards agreement with the Agency, and signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The IAEA's efforts to promote nuclear-free zones are highly commendable. The signing of the Pelindaba Treaty turns the whole southern hemisphere into a vast nuclear-free zone. We believe that this development should inspire countries of the northern hemisphere to take similar steps. In this context, the Belarus initiative aimed at establishing a nuclear-free space in the European region acquires particular relevance and importance. Its realization could promote strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, European and international security and confidence-building among States, without prejudice to stability within the European continent.

We strongly support the IAEA's efforts to improve the efficiency of the safeguards system, and we remain committed to strict compliance with our international obligations in this area. In close cooperation with Japan, Sweden and the United States of America, and with the Agency's coordination, the major part of the work in establishing in Belarus a State system of accounting and control for nuclear materials has been accomplished. In this connection, we would like to express our gratitude to the Governments of those countries for their support and assistance. The installed measuring systems allow us not only to keep track of nuclear materials but also to monitor their transit through the territory of Belarus. Taking into account the availability in Belarus of highly skilled specialists in this field, we would like to renew our proposal to the IAEA secretariat to establish a regional training centre in Belarus on controls and physical protection of nuclear materials.

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Belarus welcomes the IAEA's efforts in strengthening the existing safeguards system provided for in programme "93 + 2" and the application of the Model Additional Protocol. We are confident that the Agency will continue to play the key role in strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

Belarus recognizes the significant amount of work done by the Agency in the international legal and standard-building fields. The results of this work include the adoption of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. In this context, I am pleased to inform the General Assembly that the Parliament of Belarus has ratified the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, thus taking further steps towards close international cooperation in the nuclear field.

Illicit trafficking in nuclear materials may pose a serious threat to the security of States. In this context, our delegation welcomes the measures taken by the Agency — namely, the adoption of the programme for combating illicit trafficking in nuclear material, agreed upon at the Moscow and Denver Summits. The Russian Federation's proposal regarding formulation of a convention to combat acts of nuclear terrorism, being discussed in the Sixth Committee, also merits a positive response.

Last year the international community commemorated with grief the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe, which affected every fifth citizen of our country. We note with satisfaction that one of the sections of the report is devoted to this issue, and it confirms, *inter alia*, a dramatic increase in cases of thyroid cancer in children and serious economic and social consequences of the catastrophe. More than 2 million inhabitants have been exposed to radiation. According to the most cautious estimates, economic and material damage sustained by Belarus as a result of this disaster amounts to 32 annual budgets of the Republic, or $235 billion. Over half a million children under 17 years of age are living in the contaminated areas. According to medical experts, the dawn of the next century will see the citizens of our Republic exposed to a full-scale epidemic of cancer-related diseases.

Chernobyl is a long-term problem which can be tackled successfully only through the concerted efforts of the entire international community. This was clearly confirmed by international scientific conferences held last year in Geneva, Minsk, Vienna and Kiev. The international forums indicated a progressive worsening of the health conditions of the affected population, confirmed the real scale and magnitude of the tragedy and stressed the need for intensifying international cooperation in providing assistance to affected States.

The delegation of Belarus thanks the European Commission, the IAEA, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other organizations for their input in conducting those conferences. My country expresses the hope that the Agency will deem it expedient to use the results obtained by those organizations in its work.

Our Republic greatly appreciates the work being done by the United Nations on initiating, discussing and coordinating activities related to the solution of Chernobyl problems. At the same time, we are seriously concerned that against the background of the current discussions on the closing of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, the problem of the liquidation of medical and environmental consequences of the disaster is being pushed aside.

In this connection, we wish to draw the attention of delegations to the two important initiatives put forward by the President of Belarus at the Vienna Conference on Chernobyl. The first initiative is on the creation of an international common scientific centre for Chernobyl problems, which would pool efforts of scientists from different countries conducting research in this field. The second initiative is on the need to set up a planet protection fund, which could accumulate part of the profits of nuclear machine-building and power engineering corporations in order to use these funds for the elimination of the consequences of nuclear catastrophes and for the implementation of important environmental programmes.

We hope that the United Nations, and the IAEA in particular, will consider these ideas with understanding and support. Belarus is confident that a United Nations strategy for further enhanced international Chernobyl cooperation for the second decade after the disaster will be worked out and agreed upon in the nearest future with the active participation of the IAEA.

The promotion of technical cooperation is one of the main objectives of the Agency. We support an integrated approach by the IAEA in this field, particularly through the use of model projects, country planning frameworks and sectoral planning. As a focal point for strengthening radiation protection and nuclear safety infrastructure in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the IAEA activities deserve high praise. The Agency should continue to act with flexibility in providing country-specific technical support.

In conclusion, I wish to evaluate positively the work of the Agency in 1996, to support the priority directions of its future activities and to express the hope that cooperation with the Agency in resolving all problems related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy will become increasingly close.

Mr. Takht-Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Hans Blix for his outstanding performance during his tenure as Director General of the Agency. My congratulations are also due to Mr. ElBaradei, the new Director General of the Agency. We are confident that with his valuable professional expertise and experience, he is well placed to assist the States members of the Agency in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy throughout the world, as envisaged in the statute of the IAEA.

Having reviewed the annual report of the IAEA for 1996, we are pleased to see that the Agency is continuing to make progress in its mandated objectives and duties. The end of the cold war has enhanced the relevance of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In this regard, the IAEA is expected to promote the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world and, at the same time, to verify vigorously the obligations of all the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

One of the main objectives of the IAEA is to ensure that nuclear energy is not used in furtherance of military purposes. In this context, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones through legally binding instruments has proved to be a viable tool in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The recent conclusion of such treaties in Africa and South Asia has been an important step towards a world free from nuclear weapons. By the same token, the initiative aimed at making the sensitive region of Central Asia a zone free from nuclear weapons is commendable.

Regrettably, however, despite the long-standing support of the Agency, a nuclear-weapon-free zone is yet to be established in the Middle East, due, as is commonly recognized, to the refusal of Israel, with the well-known support of certain nuclear Powers, to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to place its unsafeguarded nuclear-weapon facilities under IAEA safeguards.

As an original signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the IAEA safeguards, the Islamic Republic of Iran has complied with all its obligations under the Treaty. This has been acknowledged on numerous occasions by the Agency's teams of experts and officials when visiting Iran, including Mr. Blix himself. Moreover, Iran has always pursued an open and transparent policy in its peaceful nuclear activities, and will continue to support the strengthening of comprehensive, non-discriminatory and balanced non-proliferation principles.

As stated in decision 2 on "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament", unanimously adopted during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT, the IAEA is the competent authority responsible to verify and assure, in accordance with the statute of the Agency and the Agency's safeguards system, compliance by States parties with its safeguards agreements. The decision further states that nothing should be done to undermine the authority of the IAEA in this regard. States parties that have concerns regarding non-compliance with the safeguards agreements of the Treaty by the States parties should direct such concerns, along with supporting evidence and information, to the Agency to consider, investigate, draw conclusions and decide on necessary actions in accordance with its mandate. It is unfortunate to note that certain States parties, in total disregard of their commitments undertaken during the 1995 Conference, continue to level politically motivated allegations against other States parties. Repetition of such claims will definitely undermine the role of the IAEA in the implementation of the NPT.

After the second Persian Gulf war, the Agency initiated a programme to strengthen and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its safeguards system. This led to the adoption, by the Board of Governors last May, of a Model Additional Protocol to safeguards agreements. We firmly believe that the Protocol should be applied equally to the nuclear facilities of all States, in particular those that possess nuclear weapons. The universality of the new safeguards system is the only way to ensure the

compliance of all States with the nuclear non-proliferation principles envisaged in the NPT and the statute of the IAEA.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, along with many other developing countries, is convinced that the Additional Protocol to safeguards agreements should not compromise the inalienable rights of the parties to the NPT to the peaceful uses of nuclear materials and technology. With the new strengthened safeguards system in place, there are no justifications — if there ever were any — for existing discriminatory restrictions and regimes on the transfer of nuclear materials and technology for peaceful purposes.

We note the recent developments concerning the revision of article VI of the statute of the Agency on the composition of the Board of Governors, and are of the view that certain regions do not enjoy adequate representation in the main decision-making body of the IAEA. This issue has been on the agenda of the General Conference of the Agency for 20 years. A number of developments, including an increase in the membership of the Agency, have made it abundantly necessary to review this article with a view to better reflecting the existing realities in the international community. My delegation believes that this issue should not be linked to certain other issues such as the composition of certain geographical groupings. The package approach may only complicate the process. It is our considered view that the recognized members of each geographical grouping of the Agency are well placed to decide about their composition.

In conclusion, we hope that the IAEA, under the new leadership, will continue to promote its lofty objectives into the next century.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan): Allow me first of all to express my delegation's appreciation to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the report submitted to the General Assembly on its activity for 1996, as contained in document GC(41)/8. We would also like to thank the Director General of the Agency, Mr. Hans Blix, for his comprehensive introductory statement.

For 40 years, the IAEA has significantly contributed to strengthening the non-proliferation regime, devising effective mechanisms for monitoring the trafficking of nuclear materials, strengthening the international system of guarantees, and establishing effective cooperation on nuclear energy issues, radiation safety and waste disposal.

The annual report of the IAEA which has been submitted for our attention clearly illustrates the vitally important role which the Agency plays in meeting these combined challenges under the terms of its statute and the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Following the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Kazakhstan was left with a nuclear inheritance including nuclear weapons, a uranium industry, uranium-processing and fuel-production enterprises, and experimental industrial nuclear reactors.

Upon achieving independence, Kazakhstan unequivocally stated its attitude to nuclear weapons. Our country's clear-cut and firm position on nuclear disarmament and the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime was confirmed by a number of specific actions. One of the first was the decree of the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, closing down the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. Kazakhstan acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State. All nuclear warheads were removed from the Republic. Kazakhstan received comprehensive guarantees of its security and territorial integrity from the nuclear powers. In October 1996, Kazakhstan signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Kazakhstan fully supports the Agency's efforts aimed at strengthening the existing system of guarantees. Our country, as a member of the IAEA, has signed a safeguards agreement with the IAEA which came into force in August 1995 following ratification by decree of the President of Kazakhstan. Under the agreement, all of the Republic's peaceful nuclear activity is subject to IAEA safeguards. The measures contained in Part 1 of programme "93 + 2" have started to be applied at nuclear facilities in Kazakhstan that have been placed under safeguards.

We welcome the measures being undertaken by the IAEA to prevent illegal trafficking in nuclear materials and sources of ionizing radiation. In recognition of the fact that national Governments bear a tremendous responsibility in this regard, a State system of accounting and monitoring nuclear materials has been devised and is operating in Kazakhstan, and reports are being prepared for the IAEA. Agency inspections take place at all nuclear facilities and nuclear materials are verified. These extensive measures ensure the transparency of nuclear activity in our country's territory.

Kazakhstan greatly appreciates the role of the IAEA in strengthening the system for monitoring the trafficking of nuclear materials and enhancing the system's effectiveness. In its export policy, Kazakhstan complies with all the Agency's requirements as regards the import and export of nuclear materials. These requirements are reflected in current government guidelines regulating imports and exports. The national law on export control and the law on the use of atomic energy are the principal legal underpinnings of the unified system of State monitoring of nuclear materials in the Republic at the present time.

With one power reactor and four research reactors, our country fully supports the efforts of the IAEA in the field of nuclear safety. Kazakhstan is currently carrying out the internal State procedures that will enable it to ratify the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which we signed last year.

The problem of how to handle radioactive waste is an important issue for Kazakhstan. Like any country developing a nuclear power industry, Kazakhstan is trying to identify acceptable solutions to this problem. Meanwhile, we must elaborate a modern legislative and normative base to deal with radiation safety and waste handling, as well as an appropriate infrastructure. This is why the Kazakh Government has endorsed a regional IAEA project designed to meet these challenges by the start of the next century.

Kazakhstan is taking part in technical cooperation projects with the IAEA concerning the use of nuclear and isotope methods in industry, agriculture, medicine, hydrology and other fields, and we hope that this cooperation will be extended. It is in this area that our country can make a contribution to expanding the peaceful use of nuclear technologies. For example, our country has accumulated fairly wide experience in using a fast reactor for removing salt from sea water, which Kazakhstan could share with interested countries.

Kazakhstan possesses ample scientific and technical potential in the field of nuclear energy. The Government is devoting special attention to converting the former nuclear test site near Semipalatinsk, whose research facilities currently form part of the National Nuclear Centre of Kazakhstan. In this area, Kazakhstan is actively cooperating with the IAEA. Studies have been made of the radiological condition of the territory of the test site. The findings are helping to identify possible ways to manage the consequences of years of nuclear weapon tests.

Once again it should be recalled that over a period of more than 40 years, the world's largest nuclear test site at Semipalatinsk witnessed 470 nuclear explosions, 113 of which took place in the atmosphere. Those explosions represented approximately 70 per cent of all the nuclear weapon tests conducted by the former USSR. Colossal damage has been inflicted on the health of the people of Kazakhstan and their environment. As indicated in the IAEA annual report presented here today, prolonged residence in the localities around this test site is resulting in unacceptably high doses of radiation. We hope that future technical assistance from the Agency will be adequate to meet the urgent problems facing Kazakhstan in this regard.

In September 1997, exactly 50 years after the establishment of the Semipalatinsk test site, the International Conference on Problems of Nuclear Weapon Non-Proliferation was held in Almaty and Kurchatov, Kazakhstan, on the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nazarbaev. Political and technical issues related to assurance of a non-proliferation regime and the problems of converting former nuclear test sites and their infrastructure were discussed at the Conference.

In his address to the Conference participants, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, stressed that:

> "This Conference is one of a number of important steps towards a nuclear-free world. The world community knows that nuclear tests have caused an extended area of Kazakhstan to be affected by nuclear radiation with significant deterioration of the environment. This problem requires international attention. Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, as well as protection of the environment and economic development, are important items on the agenda of the international community."

In the final document of the Conference, which has been circulated in United Nations document A/52/461, the Conference participants noted that:

> "The Conference gave experts with different approaches to solving proliferation problems, the opportunity to exchange their views, to share experience of different countries and international organizations directed to strengthening the nonproliferation regime." [A/52/461, annex, fourth paragraph]

They expressed the hope that it had

> "contributed significantly to the understanding of the problems related to strengthening non-proliferation and ... that progress was achieved in mutual understanding between the participating countries." [ibid., fifth paragraph]

The Conference participants also expressed their gratitude to the International Atomic Energy Agency for its noble efforts

> "in strengthening the regime as well as its activities in increasing the efficiency of international safeguards of peaceful nuclear activity." [ibid., third paragraph]

They wished the Agency

> "further success in its activities during its fortieth anniversary year and in the years to come." [ibid., fifth paragraph]

The IAEA plays an important and increasingly active role in promoting the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and in supporting and strengthening the non-proliferation regime. In reiterating its high regard for the Agency's contribution to strengthening peace and security, Kazakhstan stands ready to continue promoting IAEA programmes and activities and to act as its reliable partner in these efforts.

Mr. Du Preez (South Africa): Like other speakers before me, I wish, on behalf of my delegation, to thank Mr. Hans Blix for his comprehensive introduction of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We would also like to thank the Ambassador of Japan for introducing the draft resolution on the report of the IAEA, of which South Africa is a sponsor.

1997 has been a truly remarkable year for the Agency, one which will be long remembered because of the many significant achievements.

In the first place, it has been the year of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Agency and the year of leadership change. The fortieth anniversary has been a time for reflection at the Agency on the achievements of the past 40 years and on the way forward. This was very much the theme of the recent General Conference of the Agency in Vienna, and I will not dwell on that issue here. South Africa was a founding member of the Agency, one of the original eight nations that met in December 1953 to negotiate its founding. The Agency has grown in stature over the years, and is now a highly regarded member of the United Nations family, fulfilling a vital function not only in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, but also in global disarmament through administration of its safeguards programme.

1997 has also been a year of leadership change at the Agency, with the departure of Mr. Hans Blix after 16 years at the helm. Many tributes have been paid to Mr. Blix in Vienna, at recent Board meetings and at the General Conference, and my delegation thinks it is a fitting tribute to him that 1997 should have seen such remarkable progress in a variety of areas. Following on the conclusion of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, we saw in 1997 the conclusion of two important new instruments: the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, and the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. Very significant for global disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation was the adoption of the Model Additional Protocol for strengthened safeguards, which has already been adopted by a number of member States. It is to be hoped that this Protocol will form the basis of strengthened safeguards agreements between the Agency and all its members, and we would urge all those members to reflect on the historic importance of this development and on the need to support it.

We fully support the Agency in its efforts to resolve the outstanding questions of safeguards in Iraq and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and we call on those States to cooperate fully in the Agency's inspections.

While my delegation would agree that the Agency is basically in good shape, we should caution that there are areas that need improvement, as well as some worrying signs. Foremost among these is concern over the future of the Agency's technical cooperation activities. As members will realize, technical cooperation is of particular significance and importance for developing countries. Now that such progress has been made in areas such as nuclear safety, with the finalizing of the recent conventions, and in strengthening the safeguards system, it would be tragic if the Agency's technical cooperation programme — which is, after all, designed to promote a fundamental activity of the Agency — should suffer from a lack of adequate resources. South Africa would therefore appeal to all members of the Agency to ensure

that this vital function is maintained at an appropriate level and continues to develop in order to meet the needs of countries.

I wish to conclude by saying how pleased the South African Government is to welcome the new Director General of the Agency, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei of Egypt, to his post. We believe he is an excellent choice, and we know he brings with him to the post special insights into the needs of Africa and developing countries in general. We will fully support him in his endeavours to build on the undoubted success of his distinguished predecessor.

With these remarks, the South African delegation supports the adoption of draft resolution A/52/L.13.

Mr. Sotirov (Bulgaria): On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria, I would like to associate myself with the statement made this morning by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

This year's regular session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) marked the fortieth year of the entry into force of its statute. The Agency has a special and important role, as a member of the United Nations family, in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, which should be addressed through cooperative efforts and solid commitments. It is a role that, given its record of activities, the IAEA has played commendably in the past four decades.

In addition to the relevant international agreements, national export-control mechanisms are an important tool for preventing nuclear proliferation. As a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Zangger Committee, Bulgaria shares the view that the right to develop the research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), is to be exercised in conformity with the non-proliferation obligations set out in articles I and II of that Treaty.

The problems related to illicit nuclear trafficking also remained high on the agenda of the international community in 1997, due to public-safety, health and proliferation risks. While considering that the primary responsibility in this field lies with the member States, we recognize the growing importance of international cooperation between them, as well as the role of the IAEA in supplementing the action of Governments and in providing coordination of measures to assist them in areas such as training, physical protection of nuclear materials and exchange of information.

Efforts to promote nuclear safety received a boost last year with the entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. Bulgaria is among the original Contracting Parties to the Convention and is pleased with the progress made by the first Preparatory Meeting in April 1997, as well as with the preparations for the meetings of the States parties for safety peer reviews, scheduled for next year. The Convention on Nuclear Safety is soon to be joined by other international legal instruments that will contribute to the establishment of what the 1997 Nuclear Safety Review calls "the global nuclear safety culture".

Let me note in this regard that the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, as well as the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, opened for signature at the forty-first session of the International Atomic Energy Agency's General Conference. Bulgaria is considering acceding to these Conventions, despite the significant financial problems connected with their implementation.

The year 1997 has been a successful one for the Agency in the area of technical-cooperation activities to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. New strategies and approaches in research and the transfer of nuclear technology have been put into place to strengthen the technical cooperation programmes of the IAEA and the capabilities of Member States to safely apply nuclear and radiation technologies aimed at achieving direct practical benefits.

The Republic of Bulgaria is among the countries using nuclear energy to generate electricity. In 1996, the output of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant (NPP) was 42 per cent of total electricity production. In the exploitation of nuclear power reactors, great attention is paid to ensuring nuclear safety and radiation protection. Our efforts are focused on three main objectives: first, enhancing the safe operation of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant units; secondly, increasing the efficiency of the Inspectorate on the Safe Use of Atomic Energy within the Committee on the Use of Atomic Energy for Peaceful Purposes; thirdly, improving the national nuclear

legislation and its harmonization with that of the European Union.

The IAEA has provided us with considerable assistance in achieving these objectives by training Bulgarian inspectors in interregional and regional training courses and seminars, as well as by providing direct assistance through the technical-cooperation project entitled Strengthening the Capabilities of the Bulgarian Nuclear Safety Authority. As a country that operates nuclear power plants of the WWER type, we are interested in the Agency's extra-budgetary programme on the safety of this type of reactor. In our view, this programme, which has already shown its effectiveness, could be extended and may coordinate the planning and the technical assistance for upgrading and modernizing the Kozloduy nuclear power plant units.

Following international recommendations, the Programme for Ensuring the Safe Operation of Unit 1 Reactor Pressure Vessel during the Rest Lifetime was carried out in 1996. Detailed pressurized thermal shock (PTS) analyses, as well as fracture mechanical calculations of the reactor pressure vessel (RPV), were accomplished. The results have clearly demonstrated that Unit 1 RPV can be safely operated for several years, without the introduction of additional technical measures. This conclusion was reached at the international meeting organized in Sofia in May this year in cooperation with the IAEA secretariat.

During the last few years a number of measures have been implemented to enhance the Kozloduy nuclear power plant's safety level. The elaboration of the Comprehensive Programme for the Enhancement of the Safety of the Kozloduy NPP Units 1-4 to Ensure Their Operation during the Rest Lifetime started in 1996. The aim of that Programme is to take appropriate measures that are economically justifiable and technically applicable to the characteristics of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant. These measures are directed at eliminating the design shortcomings of the units in the context of the requirements of the current regulatory and technical documentation. The first draft of the Comprehensive Programme has been prepared and is currently under consideration. In cooperation with the Consortium of Western Regulators, experts of the Bulgarian National Safety Authority are working on a set of updated criteria for the reconstruction of units 1 to 4. The Upgrading Programme was elaborated to ensure the safe operation of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant Units 5 and 6. Agency experts were invited to review the draft programme and their recommendations have been taken into consideration in the final text. This programme will be implemented by a consortium of German, Russian and French companies, as well as by Westinghouse and the nuclear power plant itself. In 1996-97 a modern system for permanent monitoring of the radiation and meteorological conditions in the country was delivered and installed under the PHARE programme. A computer network has been set up in the regulatory body for processing, analysing and recording the information related to the application of radioactive sources in research, medicine, industry and agriculture.

The technical cooperation between the IAEA and Bulgaria continued successfully during the period under review. Our scientists and experts took part in the agency's Research Programme, the Advisory Group meetings and the Technical Committee meetings, as well as in international conferences, symposia and seminars organized by the IAEA. Bulgarian specialists were trained under the IAEA Fellowship Programme in outstanding institutes, as well as in interregional and regional training courses and seminars. Let me express our appreciation to the IAEA for the technical assistance it rendered to my country for national and regional projects.

In conclusion, allow me to pay tribute to the outgoing Director General, Mr. Hans Blix, who has guided the International Atomic Energy Agency's activities during a 16-year period with great integrity and wisdom, and to wish him all the best in his future endeavours. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei on the approval of his appointment as the next Director General by the forty-first session of the International Atomic Energy Agency General Conference, and to assure him of the full support of the Republic of Bulgaria in handling the challenging and complex tasks facing the Agency and its member States.

Mr. Galuška (Czech Republic): At the outset I wish to voice my country's support for the statement delivered by Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union and associated countries. I shall therefore limit my intervention to those issues that the Czech Republic considers of particular importance.

The forty-first session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) marked the fortieth anniversary of the Agency's existence, and as such was an occasion for drawing up a balance sheet of

achievements and failures. Above all, it was an opportunity for setting new tasks and goals.

As we all know, the main objectives of the IAEA have been to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of nuclear energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. My country shares the opinion that in this respect the work of the Agency has been successful.

For most of the past four decades the development of peaceful uses of atomic energy took place in the environment created by the cold war and the bipolar world. It should be noted that the IAEA was one of those organizations that coped with this bipolarity day by day, by bringing people of different nationalities together under its roof, by providing them with a stage for the exchange of views and experiences, and by creating a suitable platform for setting up common security principles for the use of nuclear energy. The IAEA thus contributed to greater understanding, cooperation and progress, irrespective of existing political divisions.

Over the years the IAEA has also well proved its ability to reflect the needs of its member States. In accord with them, it gradually redirected its emphasis from general and broad support for all forms of peaceful uses of atomic energy and ionizing radiation to the elaboration of basic principles of nuclear safety and radiation protection. More recently, it has focused its efforts on the problem of radioactive wastes and the nuclear fuel cycle. This process has been accompanied by seeking new, improved forms for its own management and internal structure.

The mission and tasks of the IAEA in ensuring global security in respect to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remain the top priority in the current and future activities of the Agency. The Czech Republic welcomes the adoption of the model text of the Protocol additional to the safeguards agreements as a concrete and positive outcome of the 93+2 programme. The Protocol substantively increases the inspection mandate of IAEA. I have the honour to inform the Assembly that the Czech Republic has initiated steps to accede to the Protocol.

When speaking about global safety culture, we have to place the safety of both nuclear power plants and other non-military facilities using nuclear resources for peaceful purposes in a certain international legal framework. The Czech Republic commends the efforts of the IAEA and its member States leading to the preparation and adoption of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, all of which are introducing safety standards to the areas which had not yet been covered. My country is prepared to incorporate them into its legislation upon their signature, adoption and entry into force.

The development and use of nuclear energy and ionizing radiation sources are closely linked to international cooperation and technical assistance programmes. These programmes help countries to gain new experiences, methods and approaches and at the same time to share their own experiences with others. The IAEA technical cooperation programmes, implemented at both the regional and national levels, are of particular technical, social and economic assistance to their beneficiaries.

One of the most intensively discussed topics at the last General Conference was article VI of the Statute. Those who have been interested or directly involved in the discussions would agree that we have been dealing with a very complex, complicated and sensitive issue, in which maximum understanding for partners' views and maximum flexibility are the necessary preconditions for success. The Czech Republic has stressed many times that it did not feel the urgent need for changes in the size or composition of the Board of Governors, in order to keep the work of the Board efficient and effective. However, in the course of discussions, we have decided in the spirit of compromise to accept a package solution proposed by Canada. At the same time, we would like to stress here that, should there be any attempt to deal with each aspect of the proposal separately, the Czech Republic could not go along with any solution leading to anything other than equal representation of all geographic areas, in accordance with recent developments in the membership of the IAEA, particularly in Europe.

I would like to conclude my intervention by expressing my country's appreciation and thanks to the outgoing Director General, Mr. Hans Blix, for his 16 years of work devoted to the Agency. It was a period of persistent pressure on the dynamic expansion of IAEA activities, on the one hand, and of limited funds on the other; a period when the IAEA had to cope with problems concerning Iraq, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Middle East peace talks and the effectiveness of safeguards. Mr. Blix has grappled with all of them successfully. He deserves our special thanks

for his personal contribution to the success and high reputation of the IAEA. I thank him.

At the very last, I would like to wish the IAEA and its newly elected Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, much success in their future work.

Mr. Mistrik (Slovakia): Slovakia, as an associated country to the European Union, supports and therefore endorses the statement made by Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Furthermore, I wish to make some additional remarks reflecting the position of my country on this agenda item.

Slovakia highly esteems the International Atomic Energy Agency as a crucial international organization in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The IAEA's successful results over its 40 years of existence are considerable and it is beyond all doubt that the IAEA with its safeguard system plays an exceptional and significant role in the verification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The results of the IAEA's work reflect the common endeavour of the States members and the Secretariat of that unique organization. Let me just add that Slovak experts are also actively involved in a wide range of activities related to the tasks of that organization.

A new, further step in the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and in the new arrangement of nuclear disarmament is the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Slovakia, in its national position as well as in its function as the Chair of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBT Organization (CTBTO), supports the aims of the States signatories which are interested in effective cooperation between CTBTO and IAEA. Slovakia hopes that the location of both organizations in Vienna will create excellent conditions for beneficial cooperation and help to improve verifying activities in the field of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Preparing the functional verifying system that will effectively control adherence to CTBT provisions is a complicated goal with many political aspects. Creating the network of laboratories and monitoring points and connecting this system to the International Data Centre in Vienna will require the common effort of the international community as well as Secretariat staff at the expert level.

Slovakia welcomes the fact that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as one of the pillars of global stability, confidence and nuclear disarmament, has been extended indefinitely. At this juncture, we appeal to all countries that have not signed a safeguards agreement with the IAEA, in compliance with article III of the NPT, to meet their commitments in accordance with the Treaty.

The system of safeguards is a generally recognized tool of control for compliance with the NPT, the importance of which grows with the increasing number of nuclear installations and the quantity of nuclear materials. We note with satisfaction the conclusion of the Safeguards Implementation Report for 1996, which states that nuclear materials and other items which had been declared and put under the safeguards have remained in peaceful use. On the other hand, we have noted the persistent problems in the safeguards implementation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, particularly in verifying the initial declaration. We appeal to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cooperate with the IAEA in order to finalize the process of verification of the initial declaration as soon as possible.

Slovakia supports IAEA programme "93 + 2", which represents the utilization of modern advanced verification techniques for better confidence building in future. We are convinced that this programme will become a reliable instrument for the control of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The IAEA has prepared a number of international treaties during the past few years. Slovakia was the first of those countries which possess nuclear reactors to ratify the Convention on Nuclear Safety. We note that this important Convention provides for adequate safety standards in the international environment. Slovakia also welcomes the fact that, in September 1997, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage and the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage were adopted. Those new legal instruments form an international regulation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy which, in today's world, is a notable factor of sustainable development.

Nuclear energy plays an important role in the Slovak economy. As a result of economic recovery, Slovakia has since 1994 experienced a rapid increase in electricity consumption, with an annual growth of approximately 8 per cent. On the other hand, there are a number of

programmes focusing on energy savings. In 1996 the Slovak nuclear power plants generated almost half of the total electricity in Slovakia. An independent Nuclear Regulatory Authority of the Slovak Republic assures the State's supervision of nuclear safety. Its decisions are based exclusively on technical considerations and underpinned by broad international cooperation, mainly through the IAEA. Indeed, the application of the latest scientific and technical knowledge helps to increase safety standards. Thanks to sustainable investments, Slovakia achieved a significant safety improvement in its nuclear power plants.

Technical cooperation has a special significance for Slovakia. In 1996 Slovak organizations took part in seven national and 18 regional projects. We are actively involved in research projects. Projects of technical cooperation became a part of technical development in our country. One of the most significant projects, the strengthening of the nuclear safety regulatory body, was successfully completed, and Slovakia now offers the skills it obtained to other countries.

In conclusion, please allow me to express our appreciation to the Director General of the IAEA, Mr. Hans Blix. During his 16 years in office, this international organization has become a generally recognized institution. We would like also to thank to the secretariat of the IAEA for its responsible approach to the work of the Agency. At the same time, we offer our congratulations to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, the newly elected Director General. We are convinced that under his leadership the IAEA will successfully continue to play its role, and he can count on Slovakia's assistance.

Mr. Bohalevs'ky (Ukraine): This year we mark the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Over this period, the Agency's record has proved outstanding in the areas of the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy and in the prevention of proliferation of nuclear weapons.

In the past year we have witnessed some significant events, both on a worldwide scale and directly related to the Agency's activities and cooperation between the Agency and Ukraine. Of exceptional importance were the signing here at the United Nations of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the completion of development of new international documents on the eve of the forty-first session of the Agency's General Conference. We definitely can say that the international legislation system regulating the issues of utilization of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes has been set up.

Of no less importance was the completion of programme "93 + 2" and the development of the Model Additional Protocol to the safeguards agreement, aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the safeguards system.

It is hard to overestimate the role of the Agency's safeguards in ensuring the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes; they are the major instruments for adherence to the international non-proliferation regime.

The agreement between Ukraine and the IAEA for the application of safeguards to all nuclear materials in all peaceful nuclear activities of Ukraine is in force and is being successfully fulfilled. The Government of Ukraine also supports the new initiatives of the Agency regarding the application of nuclear weapons non-proliferation safeguards.

To promote openness and control over the trafficking of nuclear materials and the sources of ionizing radiation, the Government of Ukraine has decided this year to join the relevant database of the Agency.

The problems of nuclear and radiation safety are extremely important for Ukraine, as well as for the entire world community. We are pleased to note that the IAEA Secretariat has played an important role in the efforts made in the States of Central and Eastern Europe to evaluate the safety of nuclear power plants.

Gradually, we are approaching international consensus regarding the safety of the Soviet-designed nuclear power plants. It is quite obvious that the issue of the safety of nuclear power stations cannot be solved within a short time. In addition to painstaking work, it also requires serious changes in legislation and management, as well as the development of an appropriate nuclear regulation regime. In other words, it is necessary to provide a high-standard safety culture on a governmental basis. One cannot expect quick results, but we should continue to move down this path.

The Parliament of Ukraine is presently reviewing a package of draft legislative acts on nuclear and radiation safety. In addition, the draft law entitled "On Ratification of Convention on Nuclear Safety" has been elaborated and submitted to the Parliament.

We support the Agency's activities aimed at creating a comprehensive regime of civil liability for nuclear damage, and confirm our adherence to the main principles of this regime. On 20 December 1996 Ukraine acceded to the 1963 Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage. The draft law on the introduction of corresponding changes to the national legislation has been elaborated, and it is presently under review in the Parliament.

Ukraine welcomes the recent adoption of two new instruments in the field of nuclear liability, namely, the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. We also welcome the considerable progress in reaching an international consensus on approaches to promoting the safe disposal of radioactive wastes and spent nuclear fuel, which resulted in the opening for signature of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Nuclear Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Ukraine was one of the first to sign, on 29 September 1997, these three instruments.

The problem of the safety of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant continues to give cause for concern. In this respect, let me briefly inform the Assembly about the progress in implementing the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding between the G-7, the European Commission and Ukraine that was signed in Ottawa on 20 December 1995.

In a situation of severe electric power crisis in Ukraine, it was not easy to take a decision to shut down Unit 1 of the Chernobyl station in 1996. Moreover, all the long-term safety-related programmes on this station have been terminated. Today only activities to maintain the appropriate safety level of the remaining reactors are being carried out, and short-term safety projects have been developed. All this demonstrates that Ukraine is preparing to fulfil its commitment to decommission the Chernobyl nuclear power plant by the year 2000.

In accordance with the Ottawa Memorandum, the precondition for the decommissioning of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant is the completion of construction of compensating power units. However, the issue of financial support for this project has not been solved yet by international financial institutions in a way that may result in the revision of earlier decisions regarding the decommissioning of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

The Government of Ukraine, following its commitments under the memorandum of understanding, has every reason to be concerned at the fact that current activities aimed at seeking the necessary resources to finance the rescheduled Chernobyl nuclear-power plant shutdown project are not intensive enough and, with regard to a number of projects, are being unreasonably blocked.

The failure of the agreements reached on the Chernobyl project would produce a negative reaction in Ukraine and in other States as well as adversely affect our common cause: the safe utilization of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Among the critical projects of the so-called Chernobyl package, the Government of Ukraine attaches special attention to the Shelter project on Unit 4 of the Chernobyl station, which was destroyed in the 1986 accident. We welcome the initiative of the United States Government regarding the "sarcophagus" project, which was supported by other G-7 countries and Ukraine. We also welcome the adoption, at the forty-first session of the IAEA General Conference, of the resolution on the international initiative for the Chernobyl sarcophagus, which calls on other States to contribute to the implementation of this unique project, which we hope will enhance the safety of the destroyed reactor.

In this respect, we are relying heavily on the pledging conference to be convened on 20 November in New York to consider options for funding this extremely important and unprecedented project. We hope that this initiative will receive adequate support.

Finally, we believe that the expected retirement of Mr. Hans Blix, the Agency's Director General, is also a landmark in the history of this organization. Sixteen years in office is quite a long period, and for Mr. Hans Blix, who has been closely associated with the most difficult problems that the international community has faced during the last decade, those years have been very productive. Mr. Blix has ably led the Agency through all those years with integrity and wisdom. We thank him for his achievements, which have become our common asset.

On behalf of our delegation, I also wish to take this opportunity to extend our sincere congratulations to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei on his appointment as the next Director General of the Agency. We assure him of our continued support in promoting the Agency's important objectives.

Ms. Tolle (Kenya): I wish at the outset to express, on behalf of the Kenya delegation, our appreciation to Mr. Hans Blix, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for the comprehensive overview of the Agency's activities in the last year, in addition to the Agency's report (GC(41)/8), which is before us. My delegation congratulates the Director General and the entire staff of the IAEA for their continued commitment and dedicated service to the international community in upholding and implementing the mandates entrusted to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The year 1997 marks a milestone in the history of the IAEA. It is the year the Agency has celebrated its fortieth anniversary while at the same time making a change in its top executive. We are all aware of the decision by Mr. Hans Blix to retire at the end of this month after 16 years of dedicated service to the Agency. It is in recognition of his pragmatic stewardship and outstanding contribution and service to the Agency that the forty-first IAEA General Conference honoured him with the title of Director General Emeritus. The effective role he has played over the years as Ambassador extraordinary for nuclear energy is well known by all. In Kenya, Mr. Blix will be fondly remembered for the many technical cooperation initiatives undertaken in the country during his tenure of office and his efforts under the Agency Statute to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, implement the safeguards regime and minimize the risk to life, health and the environment posed by nuclear energy. We wish Mr. Blix a fulfilling, successful and peaceful retirement.

In the last 40 years, the IAEA has distinguished its useful and reputable existence and service to Member States in the development of applications of nuclear technology for sustainable development. My delegation is pleased to note that the Agency's performance in the past year has been as commendable as in previous years, making it possible for Member States to derive maximum benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy through its technical cooperation programme. Since the emergence of its first model project protocol, technical cooperation has increasingly been focused on end users, thereby enhancing the economic and social impact of nuclear energy. The success of the model project has invigorated the Agency's technical cooperation activities, which have resulted in new initiatives comprising model projects, country programme frameworks and thematic planning. Other initiatives include technical cooperation among developing countries, co-funding, and the use of targets and success criteria.

In our view, this approach is likely to produce the tangible social and economic results desired within the framework of the technical cooperation programme, and to be more responsive to national needs through the direct contribution of nuclear energy to the achievement of sustainable development priorities in a cost-effective manner, thereby increasing the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the programme. We therefore urge all our partners to give maximum support to this initiative, whose noble objectives, as envisaged by the Agency, are accelerating and enlarging the contribution of nuclear energy to human development.

The United Nations has repeatedly advocated the philosophy of technical cooperation among developing countries based on the recognition of the fact that different levels of technical advancement exist among developing countries, which, if applied to the maximum, can lead to mutual benefits. In this respect, we commend the Agency for its elaborate programme aimed at promoting regional cooperative activities as a means of accelerating nuclear technology transfer. The support extended by the IAEA to regional groupings such as the African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Energy (AFRA), the Regional Cooperative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America (ARCAL) and the Regional Cooperative Arrangements for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology in Asia (RCA), as well as the regional projects under the technical cooperation programme are a clear demonstration of the visionary and keen interest by the Agency in fostering and strengthening regional cooperation. We believe that these endeavours will ultimately ensure optimal use of the available scarce resources and lead to the positive impact of science and technology among partner countries.

At the bilateral level, my delegation is grateful to the Director General and his staff for their contribution to the success of the technical cooperation programme in Kenya. Benefits derived from this programme in the various sectors of our economy include training and fellowships, technology, animal and human health, agriculture and nuclear safety.

In the field of safety standards and radiation safety, the project on the application of non-destructive testing techniques in manufacturing for quality control and for establishing acceptable standards of industrial goods in Kenya has been extended in the past year through the

assistance of the Agency. This expansion has necessitated the enlisting of the Kenya Bureau of Standards to work with the International Standards Organization and other parties in drawing up a harmonized national qualification and certification regime.

Meanwhile, the involvement of the Agency in the agricultural sector has led to the development of new varieties of wheat with improved resistance to drought; the diagnosis and control of animal diseases; and the control of the tsetse fly and trypanosomiasis, among others.

Similarly, the Agency's technical cooperation programmes in Kenya have greatly helped the national health care delivery system, particularly in the areas of diagnostic radiology and radiography. The national focal point institutions for these two areas are currently in the process of disseminating the scientific and technical skills in this field to end users in the national health care system. Furthermore, the competent national institutions in my country are in the process of developing a technical cooperation project with the assistance of the Agency with a view to improving the diagnosis and therapy of cancer of the cervix among women.

The role of the IAEA in international efforts aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons has become increasingly important over the years. In this respect, Kenya appreciates the part played by the Agency, in cooperation with Member States, in dealing with the issue of illicit trafficking in nuclear devices and radioactive sources. The Agency's database programme, assistance to member States in improving the physical protection and control of nuclear material and border control measures, among other things, are all commendable achievements.

We believe, however, that in any collective move towards the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons leading to their complete elimination, the following major steps are paramount: first, it is vital to stop the production and use of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. In this regard, my delegation would like to render its support and urge the commencement of negotiations on a convention to prohibit the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear devices. Secondly, negotiations towards the elimination of nuclear weapons should be pursued as a matter of highest priority to complement all other efforts towards these objectives achieved so far in the field of nuclear disarmament, such as the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and the IAEA's adoption of a model protocol additional to existing safeguards agreements between States and the IAEA designed to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the IAEA safeguards regime.

We are pleased to note that the achievements of the IAEA have this year been further enhanced by the successful conclusion of two important diplomatic conferences in Vienna at the beginning of autumn. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and the adoption of two instruments relating to nuclear liability, all of which were opened for signature at the outset of the forty-first regular session of the IAEA General Conference.

I would be remiss if I lost sight of the progress made by the Agency in promoting the role of women in science and technology. My delegation is pleased to note that, although the number of Professional women has not increased as much as it should have, progress has nonetheless been achieved. We have noted that the proportion of Professional women has risen from 11.7 per cent in 1982 to 18.6 per cent in 1997, while higher Professional-level posts occupied by women today include 11 women at the P-5 level and six at the D-1 level, as opposed to only two P-5s in 1982. We are trust that greater efforts will be made in identifying, training and recruiting competent and well-qualified female candidates from all regions of the world to balance the equation.

Let me conclude by stating that when Mr. Blix leaves office at the end of this month he will be handing over a reputable and viable organization to a distinguished successor, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, who will ensure continuity and usher member States and the Agency into the next millennium. It is therefore our collective responsibility to ensure that the Agency is funded adequately and promptly. For its part, my Government will continue to render full support to the Agency's new leadership in responding to its demanding portfolio and to the challenges of tomorrow's world.

I wish to close by stating that Kenya will support draft resolution A/52/L.13.

Mr. Núñez-Mosquera (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): This year is especially significant: we are marking the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The record of the international community's efforts since then to preserve the peaceful uses of nuclear

energy and to increase their economic and social impact is undoubtedly positive.

Like many other developing countries, Cuba has benefitted from technical cooperation with the IAEA. We are pleased to say that my country's participation in such cooperation is now at its highest level. In several areas, we are sending experts to other countries and offering facilities for training foreign specialists, and some of our products have even been used for international cooperation projects in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. That is why Cuba is firmly convinced of the inestimable value of development, advancement and technical cooperation activities for the mission of the Agency. We believe that such activities should not merely continue but should be further strengthened.

Unfortunately, there are forces that are not restrained even by the most fundamental principles of international coexistence and that are trying to manipulate international agencies for their own petty political interests. On 30 July 1997, the IAEA secretariat circulated to all States members of the Agency a note by Cuba detailing United States actions intending by various means to boycott Cuba's nuclear programme, in particular cooperation between the IAEA and Cuba. The extraordinary appearance in the infamous Helms-Burton Act of an entire chapter of specific measures against Cuba's nuclear programme has now been combined with action in the United States Congress on a set of amendments and other legislative subterfuges intended to obstruct Cuba's participation in the IAEA. Such action is reprehensible, and my country categorically rejects it.

It was a great honour for Cuba this year to host the first meeting of the highest national authorities of countries members of the Programme of Regional Cooperative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean (ARCAL). The meeting strengthened that important programme and increased the scope and impact of its projects. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the valuable support from the IAEA secretariat for the successful holding of that gathering.

The Convention on Nuclear Safety and of the recent Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage exemplify the IAEA's tireless work to bring the culture of safety to the international level. Cuba recently deposited its instrument of accession to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, and we reaffirm our support for the principles and objectives of that Convention.

We also recognize the efforts made to strengthen the Agency safeguards, which culminated in the adoption this year of a Model Additional Protocol. We reiterate the need to ensure that the safeguards activities do not become an unacceptable financial burden for the developing countries.

My country has carefully followed the course of events regarding the treatment of specific country cases within the IAEA framework; some are even singled out in the resolutions on the IAEA report adopted by the General Assembly in recent years. We maintain our reservations regarding the inclusion of controversial formulations in the resolution, because, since this is an Agency of such importance to the international community, the resolution on it should be adopted only on the basis of the widest possible consensus.

Mr. Erdös (Hungary): My delegation associates itself with the statement of the Ambassador of Luxembourg made on behalf of the European Union.

The comprehensive overview of the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) presented by Director General Hans Blix elaborates another successful year in the Agency's 40-year history. The IAEA has again demonstrated not only its benefits, but also the indispensable nature of this institution. Moreover, it has given additional proof of its ability to adjust to the challenges of a new era. In doing so, the Agency has successfully fulfilled its role in the promotion and expansion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, as well as in the implementation of the safeguards measures, in compliance with the objectives and provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

As we witness the expansion of peaceful, both non-power and power, applications of nuclear techniques, it is all the more important to put in place and upgrade, whenever possible, proper assurance mechanisms. On the one hand, these involve verification based on an enhanced safeguards regime; on the other, they involve the adoption of high safety standards to be implemented within the framework of the safeguards agreements. While the Convention on Nuclear Safety, together with the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste

Management, provide additional instruments for the strengthening of the safety standards, the so-called Model Additional Protocol for safeguards agreements adopted in May constitutes the basis for further improvement of the efficiency of the Agency in detecting possible undeclared activities and pre-empting any misappropriation of nuclear technologies. The Agency's authority in the verification process is not to be challenged. The international community should continue to show unwavering support for measures which further cement the ability of the Agency to enlarge the scope of its safety regime and to ensure the prompt and full implementation of its safety agreements. In this context, we endorse the measures designed to enhance the safe transport of radioactive materials and to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear materials.

It is well known that Hungary continues to rely on energy generated by nuclear power plants. Consequently, it stands firm in its commitment to participate actively in the Agency's cooperation and education programmes and in its readiness to adopt the latest safety standards and to contribute to the prevention of any form of misappropriation of nuclear technologies.

Hungary has thus concluded a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency and joined the Convention on Nuclear Safety. Recently it was among the first States to sign the latest legal instruments on spent fuel and radioactive waste management, as well as on civil liability for nuclear damage. Hungary is also prepared to enter into an additional protocol complementing its safeguards agreement, in strict observance of the guidelines constituting the basis of the Model Protocol.

Our sense of success should not overshadow the need for unrelenting vigilance. We should not shy away from voicing our concerns. The stakes are too high. In this context, we are troubled by the fact that the recognition of the organic interrelationship between the benefits of cooperation on the one hand and readiness to implement and strengthen safeguards arrangements on the other is apparently a concept not universally shared. Despite the efforts of the international community in general, and the Agency in particular, there is still a way to go towards further enlarging the scope of the safeguards regime, both in depth and in geographical terms. Sadly, in a number of cases, serious doubts still linger with regard to the possible misappropriation of nuclear technologies.

In this context, we are concerned that the issue relating to Iraq's nuclear programme has not ceased to feature on our agenda. We are also concerned that the relevant Security Council resolutions could not be implemented to the extent necessary for clarification of all remaining doubts associated with this programme. Regrettably, some recent developments have further complicated the situation. We join others in calling upon the Iraqi authorities to cooperate with the Agency and the mandated international bodies, and to furnish them with the information requested, in full compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Another issue which has remained a prominent item on our agenda for years relates to the uncertainties surrounding the nuclear programme launched by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We regret that repeated requests made by the Security Council, urging that country to cooperate fully with the Agency and to comply with the stipulations of its safeguards agreement, have gone unheeded, and that the answers provided have failed to help establish a sufficiently clear picture regarding this issue. We fully support the efforts and verification activities carried out by the Agency in order to clarify this situation in a reassuring manner.

When speaking about the peaceful use of nuclear energy, one cannot circumvent the subject of Chernobyl. The event that took place there more than 10 years ago literally sent shock-waves throughout a vast region, where my country is also situated. The nuclear disaster in Chernobyl was, and still is, a vivid and graphic reminder of the vulnerability of our interdependent world. It sent the strongest message possible about the urgency of improving nuclear safety and security. In this context, Hungary is looking forward to the forthcoming international meetings to be held in New York with the aim of mobilizing and coordinating the efforts by the international community in this respect.

In his statement to the forty-first session of the General Conference of the IAEA, the Director General was right in pointing out that:

> "An organization is not only statute, records and decisions. It is also personalities, negotiations, tradition and atmosphere".

I wish, therefore, to take this opportunity to extend our special thanks to Director General Hans Blix for his dedicated work and strenuous efforts, which have constituted steady and universally valued guidance for the Agency in the course of the last 16 years. We also wish to sincerely congratulate Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei upon

his appointment as the new Director General of the Agency.

Finally, Hungary, as one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/52/L.13, recommends the draft resolution for adoption by the General Assembly.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/52/L.13. Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the vote, I would like to remind representatives that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Kumar (India): India, which is a founder member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has consistently attached the highest importance to the objectives of the Agency. Since this resolution pertains to the activities of the IAEA, to which we attach great value, we would go along with the resolution. Nevertheless, we have considerable difficulty with the third preambular paragraph.

The language in this paragraph suggests a linkage between adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the freedom to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The statute of the IAEA, which must guide all our deliberations, calls on the Agency to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. Furthermore, the statute stresses the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members. The purpose of these provisions in the statute of the IAEA is obviously to encourage the unfettered access of member States to the peaceful uses of atomic energy without any discrimination whatsoever. Any perceived discrimination will have an inevitable consequence on the response of member States to their obligations to the Agency. The Agency should not become a shadow political forum to repeat the debate in the United Nations General Assembly. The NPT is not a universal treaty and cannot be used to create differences among members of the IAEA. By implying that adherence to the NPT, on which subject my Government's views are well known, has a bearing on access to peaceful uses of atomic energy, the draft resolution deviates from the objectives enshrined in the statute.

We have therefore been constrained to call for a vote on the third preambular paragraph, and shall vote against it.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like once again to reaffirm our position on the draft resolution submitted under agenda item 14 on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The draft resolution should stress the nature of the Agency and commend its efforts within its areas of competence. As to the exploitation of this item for political purposes, this is a matter which adversely affects the neutrality and the technical character of the Agency. It also negatively affects member States that may become targets of attack, using the Agency as a guise. That is even more tragic, especially given the fact that an attempt is being made to exploit the draft resolution on the Agency so as to justify the continuation of the embargo against and the starvation of an entire people. The arbitrary measures imposed by the Security Council on Iraq have given the Agency a specific task to perform. In this context, the Agency has presented its reports to the Security Council for the past six and a half years. An attempt to circumvent the assessment made by the Agency undermines the credibility of the Agency itself, and it should cease.

Operative paragraph 7 of A/52/L.13 provides the clearest example of those attempts to circumvent the assessment by the Agency and embodied in its semi-annual report presented to the Security Council on 8 October 1996, in document S/1997/779. Paragraph 7 of the draft resolution contains an imprecise and unfair evaluation of the fulfilment by Iraq of its commitments. However, the report of the Agency to which I have just referred reflects Iraq's implementation of its obligations in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolution, resolution 687 (1991). Indeed, it had been considered by many people as a closure of the nuclear dossier with regard to Iraq. To cite a few examples, without being exhaustive, I would like to refer to a number of paragraphs in the Agency report presented to the Security Council.

(*spoke in English*)

The report of the IAEA to the Security Council states, in paragraphs 77 and 79:

> "There are no indications to suggest that Iraq was successful in its attempt to produce nuclear weapons
> ...

"There are no indications to suggest that Iraq had produced more that a few grams of weapon-usable nuclear material ... through its indigenous processes, all of which has been removed from Iraq.

"There are no indications that Iraq otherwise acquired weapon-usable nuclear material ...

"There are no indications that there remains in Iraq any physical capability for the production of amounts of weapon-usable nuclear material of any practical significance ...

"There are no indications of significant discrepancies between the technically coherent picture which has evolved of Iraq's past programme and the information contained in Iraq's FFCD-F issued on 7 September 1996, as supplemented by the written revisions and additions provided by Iraq since that time."

In paragraph 81, the report states:

"The IAEA's ongoing monitoring and verification (OMV) plan was phased-in during the period from November 1992 to August 1994, at which time it was considered to be operational."

Paragraph 82 states:

"Implementation of the OMV plan has not resulted in the detection of any indications of ongoing proscribed activities or the presence in Iraq of proscribed equipment or materials apart from the items referred to in paragraph 80."

By the way, paragraph 80 of the report talks merely about documents.

In paragraph 83, the report states:

"As indicated in the foregoing, the IAEA's activities regarding the investigation of Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme have reached a point of diminishing returns and the IAEA is focusing most of its resources on the implementation and technical strengthening of its plan for the ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq's compliance with its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions."

Besides, in his statement this morning, the Director General of the IAEA stated the following:

"After extensive work involving inspections, analysis of large volumes of documentation and of information received from Member States and former suppliers of relevant items, the use of new techniques for environmental monitoring, questioning of Iraqi staff and examination of items recovered from excavations, we have been able to construct a technically coherent picture of Iraq's past nuclear programme and to gain a good understanding of the scope of the achievements of the programme. Assessment of Iraq's reissued 'Full, Final and Complete Declaration' against this coherent picture has not shown any substantial inconsistencies between the two." [See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Plenary Meetings, 48th meeting*]

I repeat, "any substantial inconsistencies between the two".

(*spoke in Arabic*)

The completion by the Agency of its task in Iraq would not have been possible had it not been for Iraq's full cooperation with the Agency. Therefore, what is stated in paragraph 7 of the draft resolution, which calls upon Iraq to cooperate fully with the Agency, is inappropriate. This is in addition to other unfair terms and phrases contained in the paragraph. We therefore request a separate vote on this paragraph, and we hope that the representatives of Member States in this august body will cause the logic of justice and fairness to prevail when they vote on it.

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation takes it as a solemn duty to state, once again, the unambiguous position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the draft resolution, since this session, like previous ones, is about to adopt this draft resolution containing stereotyped paragraphs with regard to the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula.

Since the signing of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea/United States Agreed Framework, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has frozen its nuclear facilities, permitted International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitoring activities on the frozen facilities, and provided the Agency with the necessary

conditions to carry out regular, and irregular, inspections on the unfrozen facilities, as stipulated in the Agreed Framework. As long as the frozen key nuclear facilities are under strict monitoring and the unfrozen facilities are under regular and irregular inspections by the IAEA, the information on past nuclear activities will be fully preserved.

Notwithstanding this, officials of the IAEA are unreasonably raising issues which are supposed to be dealt with in the next stage of completion of a significant portion of the light water reactor project by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization under the leadership of the United States. This can only be considered as an attempt to take the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula back to the initial stage by creating artificial obstacles to the implementation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea/United States framework agreement. Regrettably, however, a number of States take sides with the IAEA officials in urging the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to follow the unfair demand of the IAEA officials.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea/United States Agreed Framework clearly specifies the provisions concerning the replacement of the graphite moderated reactor system of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with a light water reactor system and the normalization of the political and economic relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, which were welcomed by the Security Council and the international community as the only way of resolving the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula.

However, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea/United States framework agreement is based not on confidence but on the principle of simultaneous actions by both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. All these facts show that the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula is a political and military issue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States and that it is being resolved not by the IAEA but by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States through the implementation of the Agreed Framework.

How can the Democratic People's Republic of Korea accept full inspection when the Agreed Framework has not been implemented? If the international community is really concerned at the situation on the Korean peninsula, it should, first of all take an impartial stance towards the Korean question and help it to be settled in favour of the peace and security of the region. The world has witnessed the fact that pressure does not go down well with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Therefore, my delegation will vote against the draft resolution, as it does more harm than good.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/52/L.13.

Separate, recorded votes have been requested on the third preambular paragraph and on paragraph 7 of the draft resolution. There being no objection, I shall therefore put those paragraphs to the vote separately.

I first put to the vote the third preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/52/L.13.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and

Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Israel, Pakistan

Abstaining:

Cuba

The third preambular paragraph was retained by 137 votes to 4, with 1 abstention.

[Subsequently, the delegations of Uganda and Nicaragua informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: I next put to the vote operative paragraph 7 of draft resolution A/52/L.13.

A recorded vote has also been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Zambia

Against:

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Sudan

Abstaining:

Belarus, Brunei Darussalam, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Malaysia, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Viet Nam

Operative paragraph 7 was retained by 114 votes to 2, with 18 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegations of Nicaragua and Uganda informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour; the delegation of Nigeria had intended to abstain.]

The President: I shall now put to the vote draft resolution A/52/L.13 as a whole.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria,

Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Abstaining:

China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic, Viet Nam

Draft resolution A/52/L.13 as a whole was adopted by 151 votes to 1, with 5 abstentions (resolution 52/11).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Nicaragua and Uganda informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote. I should like to remind representatives that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation appreciates the work of the IAEA in the past year and is generally satisfied with the annual report of the Agency. In the new international situation, the IAEA has made positive contributions to the promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, the implementation of safeguard measures and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Chinese delegation agrees with most elements of the draft resolution concerning the Agency's report. However, it has reservations about a certain resolution adopted by the Board of Governors and the General Conference of the IAEA which is mentioned in the draft resolution. China has always advocated that relevant problems should be solved through dialogue and consultation on an equal footing. Facts have proved that to exert pressure through the adoption of such resolutions is not only not conducive to settlement of the problem, but could possibly complicate the matter.

It was in view of this position that the Chinese delegation abstained from voting on the draft resolution.

Mr. Wahab (Pakistan): While my delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/52/L.13 as a whole, we would like to explain our position on operative paragraph 10.

In addition to the issue of the dumping of radioactive waste, Pakistan also recognizes the vital importance of managing radioactive waste in a safe and effective manner. It is for this reason that Pakistan participated actively in the Group of Experts which was established with the specific mandate of drafting a convention on the safety of radioactive waste management. The expert Group was not mandated to draft an international convention on the safety of spent fuel management.

Pakistan had suggested that if the scope of the work of the Group of Experts needed to be expanded, a fresh mandate should be sought from the General Conference of the IAEA. We also suggested that a satisfactory solution to the question of spent fuel was to consider such spent fuel in the convention which a contracting party declared as radioactive waste. However, despite the lack of an appropriate mandate, a Joint Convention which includes not only radioactive waste management but also the safety of spent fuel management was concluded.

Pakistan also had other reservations which were placed on the record of the Diplomatic Conference on the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. For the reasons we have stated, Pakistan did not support the adoption of this Joint Convention.

Our support for resolution A/52/L.13 as a whole, therefore, does not constitute an endorsement of some of its new elements, especially operative paragraph 10, concerning the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

Mr. Pham Quang Vinh (Viet Nam): The General Assembly has taken action on a draft resolution on the report of the IAEA which covers the Agency's work over

the last year. My delegation attaches great importance to the work of the IAEA in promoting the further application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, expanding cooperation and technical assistance in this regard, and ensuring that nuclear energy is used only for peaceful purposes, especially in ensuring the effective implementation of the safeguards system.

The IAEA has made major contributions to efforts to ensure nuclear safety, radiological protection and radioactive waste management, helping to minimize risks to life, health and the environment. We wish to express our high appreciation for the valuable technical and material assistance rendered by the Agency to developing countries to meet their special needs in the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and for economic development.

Each year, the General Assembly considers this agenda item, with its main thrust being to extend its appreciation and support to the overall work of the Agency. My delegation supports the General Assembly's extending of its high appreciation to the Agency, and we are in agreement with the many positive comments in the resolution, which are appreciative of the work of the Agency.

However, part of the resolution contains provisions that have serious implications for the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, a fundamental principle derived from the United Nations Charter; it also contains issues over which a divergence of views still exists in the Agency. Therefore, while highly appreciative of the noble task undertaken by the Agency, my delegation felt obliged to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution.

Mr. Gorelik (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): While supporting as a whole the draft resolution on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Russian Federation abstained in the voting on operative paragraph 7. The present wording of this paragraph contradicts the provisions of the report submitted to the Security Council by the Director General of the IAEA in October of this year, *inter alia* paragraph 79 of that report, in which it is stated directly that

> "There are no indications of significant discrepancies between the technically coherent picture which has evolved of Iraq's past programme and the information contained in Iraq's FFCD-F [Full, Final and Complete Declaration]". [S/1997/;779, appendix, para. 79]

The present version of operative paragraph 7 creates the impression that the General Assembly in substance supports the allegation that Iraq retains proscribed materials and nuclear equipment. But there is no justification for such assertions, and this is borne out with sufficient clarity by the IAEA report.

We regret that in the course of preliminary consultations it was not possible to come up with a text that could gain broad support. At the same time, we would like to underscore again that Russia continues to hold the principled position that Iraq should comply fully with Security Council resolutions, and that we favour constructive cooperation between Baghdad, the United Nations Special Commission and the IAEA, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Mr. Asculai (Israel): Israel's vote in favour of the resolution as a whole represents its appreciation of the professional work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in all areas under its mandate. However, in reference to the third preambular paragraph of the resolution, it is our firm position that the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes should be conducted on the basis of equality, as described in the IAEA statute, regardless of whether or not a member State of the Agency is party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Therefore, Israel had to vote against the third preambular paragraph of the resolution.

Permit me to join the many delegations that have already expressed gratitude to Mr. Hans Blix for his many years as the Director General of the IAEA and to wish him well. Let me also congratulate Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei on his election to the office of Director General, and to wish him success.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): Having voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.13, my delegation wishes to explain its position on the fourteenth preambular paragraph and on operative paragraph 3.

First, regarding the fourteenth preambular paragraph, on the composition of regional groups, it is our considered view that the recognized members of the eastern geographical grouping of the Agency are well placed to decide about their group's composition.

Regarding operative paragraph 3, on the Model Additional Protocol, we firmly believe that the Protocol

should be applied equally to the nuclear facilities of all States, in particular those that possess nuclear weapons. Only if it is universal can the new safeguards system ensure the compliance of all States with the nuclear non-proliferation principles envisaged in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

With regard to the statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Islamic Republic of Iran is convinced that the Additional Protocol to safeguards agreements should not come compromise the inalienable rights of the NPT parties to peaceful uses of nuclear materials and technology.

Mr. Hamdan (Lebanon) (*interpretation from Arabic*): First and foremost, I would like to state that our abstention in the voting on the draft resolution was in no way related to the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) or with the activities it has undertaken in accordance with its mandate. We highly value the role of the IAEA and its functions.

Nonetheless, in our opinion the content of the fourteenth preambular paragraph is ambiguous, and its elements are not clear. In fact, no decision on this matter was taken at the General Conference of the IAEA. This decision is still a subject of consultations, as stipulated in this paragraph.

As we see it, the purpose of this paragraph is not to advance the objectives of the IAEA, but rather the political interests of certain member States. We believe that Israel will exploit this paragraph for political purposes that are totally unrelated to the work and activities of the IAEA, and that it will seek to bypass the present regional-group system, which is in accordance with the rules of procedure of the United Nations, on which there is general agreement.

At the same time, Israel persists in refusing to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and thereby refuses to subject its nuclear facilities to the inspection and control system of the IAEA. Reliable international reports and international experts have affirmed that Israel developed its capacity to manufacture nuclear weapons that threaten not only the Arab States, but also the entire international peace and security system, and thus the peace and security of all the members of the international community.

Israel must show its respect for the IAEA and for the will of the international community, join the NPT and submit its facilities to the IAEA system of inspection and control.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/52/L.13.

This does not reflect on the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency or on the activities it carries out in accordance with its mandate, since we support and highly appreciate the Agency's work and its important role in assisting States in the field of nuclear energy for peaceful uses.

We abstained in the voting on the resolution because of the non-accession of Israel to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as applicable to the Middle East. Consequently, it is impossible to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, despite the efforts of the IAEA and its Director General, Mr. Hans Blix, to whom we express our thanks and appreciation for his services. We also wish to welcome and congratulate the new Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, and to assure him of our readiness to cooperate in ensuring the success of the Agency's work.

The fact that Israel alone in the Middle East has not acceded to the NPT or declared its intention to do so and to subject all its nuclear facilities to the IAEA safeguards regime should be seen as a danger to our region and the world at large. Israel's perseverance in its position would threaten international peace and security. We therefore hope that the international community and the IAEA will succeed in persuading Israel to accede to the NPT so that the Middle East, like other regions of the world, can become a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This would help to restore peace, security and stability to that region and the world.

As regards the fourteenth preambular paragraph of the resolution, my delegation finds strange the reference in it to an IAEA draft resolution that was introduced on 19 September 1995 but was not adopted by the IAEA General Conference and is still the subject of consultations. By invoking this draft resolution as a basis, the reference aims to serve not the purposes of the IAEA, but the political interests of certain Member States. We believe that Israel will exploit this paragraph for political purposes that have nothing whatsoever to do with the Agency's work and activities, but seek to circumvent the system of membership in regional geographical groups

recognized by the General Assembly in accordance with the procedures and regulations agreed upon unanimously by the countries of each regional group.

We once again call on the international community, and in particular the IAEA, to compel Israel, the only State in the Middle East region not party to the NPT, to manifest complete and unconditional respect for the work of the IAEA and the will of the international community by acceding to the NPT and subjecting all its nuclear activities and facilities to the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime.

Mr. Osman (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation voted in favour of resolution 52/11, in solidarity with the international consensus and out of conviction of the importance of the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We wish, however, to express our reservations concerning paragraph 7 of the resolution, which, in our view, reflects clear bias and is not balanced, but selective in nature.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to ten minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): It was not our intention to address the General Assembly today on the item under discussion. But I would like to exercise my right of reply in accordance with rule 73 of the rules of procedure in order not to allow this body to be misled by the allegations made earlier today by the representative of Armenia. To be more specific, I would like to react to the allegation of the so-called energy blockade imposed by Azerbaijan against his country.

I think there is no need to remind everyone here that Armenia is the country that has committed armed aggression against my country, occupying 20 per cent of its territory and leaving a million people without shelter. Under these circumstances, Armenia relentlessly keeps on with its effort to mislead the international community by claiming that Azerbaijan is carrying out a blockade. This allegation sounds even more outrageous given the fact that the Nakhichevan region of Azerbaijan has been cut off from the outside world for eight years by Armenia's blocking of the only road linking Nakhichevan with the rest of the country.

Taking all of that duly into account, we do not think that Azerbaijan is obliged to provide its neighbour-aggressor with energy to enable it to continue its expansionist plans. Besides, it is evident to everyone that Azerbaijan is not the only source of energy for Armenia, which successfully cooperates in this sphere with its other neighbours.

Mr. Hong Je Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea wishes to exercise its right of reply with regard to the statements of some countries which referred to the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

My delegation was surprised to see the United States, a signatory of the Agreed Framework, behaving as if it has no responsibility for the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. The nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula originated from the nuclear policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is none other than the United States that introduced nuclear weapons into South Korea and threatened the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with nuclear attack.

With the collapse of the cold war system, the United States tried to use the so-called nuclear issue in order to isolate and stifle the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Now the United States is talking about non-compliance by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the safeguards agreement, trying to create a bad image of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Certainly this will not contribute to the smooth implementation of the Agreed Framework.

I once again declare that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — under the Democratic People's Republic of Korea/United States Agreed Framework, and enjoying special status with regard to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — is doing more than it was obliged to do under the safeguards agreement. I reiterate that the resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula depends entirely on how the United States implements the Democratic People's Republic of Korea/United States Agreed Framework, which is based on simultaneous actions by both sides.

How can the Democratic People's Republic of Korea accept full inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea/United States Agreed Framework has not been implemented? The United States should bear in mind that when it takes one step the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will do the same.

Today a few States have expressed their views on the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. I think that they may have done so because they lack correct knowledge of the Korean nuclear issue. But the South Korean representative should not have done so. The South Korean authorities are traitors of the nation who have brought foreign nuclear weapons into the territory of Korea. They are still begging for the continued provision of the nuclear umbrella from the United States and at the same time are boasting of their being under the protection of the foreign nuclear umbrella. This is so ridiculous that we feel ashamed to mention it as the same nation.

When the South Korean representative talked about the nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the thought came to our minds that it was unnecessary for them to say something which the South Korean authorities have no right to say. The South Korean authorities may attempt to convince the international community of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. My delegation cannot see any credibility or sincerity in their words and deeds.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): I would like to exercise my right of reply with regard to the statement made a little earlier by my Azerbaijani colleague.

The position of my delegation on agenda item 14, "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", was set forth in my statement this morning. At this stage I will not go through an unnecessary debate with my colleague from Azerbaijan or respond to the allegations and accusations made against Armenia. I would just like to stress that Azerbaijan is in conflict with Nagorno-Karabakh, and the issue of the Nagorno-Karabakh/Azerbaijan conflict is dealt with in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group. The floor of the General Assembly is not the appropriate forum to discuss these issues, and this agenda item is not related to accusations and allegations made by my Azerbaijani colleague.

Mr. Yung Woo Chun (Republic of Korea): My delegation deeply regrets the conspicuous lack of restraint and civility in the language our North Korean colleague has used. Our North Korean colleague made a claim to the effect that Pyongyang enjoys special status under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and is therefore not currently bound by a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but is bound only by the Agreed Framework with the United States. Although we recognize that North Korea is special and unique in many different ways, this claim does not make sense to us. As long as North Korea remains a party to the NPT, it goes without saying that it is under legal obligations to comply with the safeguards agreement.

The Security Council, acting on the Geneva Agreed Framework on 4 November 1994, confirmed this point by underlining that the North Korean Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA remains binding and in force. We have no doubt that the Agreed Framework, if fully implemented, can contribute to the ultimate resolution of the Korean-North Korean nuclear issue, and that is why my Government is ready to assume the largest share of the cost of the light-water reactor project.

It should be emphasized, however, that bilateral arrangements such as the Agreed Framework are intended to supplement and not replace, supersede or detract from the global nuclear non-proliferation regime under the NPT. Therefore we cannot accept North Korea's attempt to use the Agreed Framework as an excuse for non-compliance with these multilateral obligations to all parties to the NPT.

Although North Korea argues that all that matters for now is the Agreed Framework, we cannot but point out Pyongyang's lack of cooperation with the IAEA even in verifying the implementation of the Agreed Framework. Under the Agreed Framework, North Korea is to freeze, among other things, the two proliferation-prone reactors under construction with a capacity of 50 megawatts and 200 megawatts, respectively. And yet only the empty construction sites are frozen, while the key components manufactured for the reactors have not been accounted for.

The Agreed Framework cannot attain its intended purpose until these key components are frozen, brought under effective IAEA monitoring and dismantled.

Mr. Hong Je Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I regret that I have to take the floor once again. The South Korean representative has just made a

somewhat lengthy statement with regard to the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. As I stated earlier, my delegation does not see any credibility, gravity or value in his statement. The more the South Korean representative speaks about the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, the more it will reveal a poor position, devoid of independence and manipulated by the United States.

I should like to avoid elaborating further on the nuclear issue for the sake of saving our precious time.

Mr. Yung Woo Chun (Republic of Korea): The nature of North Korea's non-compliance with the safeguards agreement and other non-proliferation commitments is well documented. We see no need to go into detail.

North Korea should realize that its nuclear issue will remain unresolved as long as it believes that prevarication and stonewalling is the best policy. The position of the Republic of Korea is reflected in paragraph 6 of the resolution that the General Assembly has just adopted by an overwhelming majority. The unmistakable message of this resolution is that there is no substitute for North Korea's cooperation in good faith with the implementation of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. We hope that North Korea will heed this message and act accordingly.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 14?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 157 *(continued)*

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/950 and Add.1-5)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.17)

The President: The report of the Secretary-General has been circulated in document A/51/950 and Addenda 1 to 5. Addendum 6 will be issued tomorrow, Thursday, 13 November. However, I should like to inform the General Assembly that Addendum 6 was circulated as CRP.6 yesterday.

We have reached an important point in our consideration of agenda item 157, "United Nations reform: measures and proposals". By submitting his report "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General has offered vivid proof of the ability of the United Nations to adapt to the changing international environment.

The Secretary-General's report has been recognized as a far-reaching attempt to transform the Organization into an institution that will be better prepared in the next century to effectively carry out the mandates emanating from the Charter and from the legislative intergovernmental machinery. It commanded broad support from the Heads of State and Government who participated in the general debate, which has been reiterated since then in a number of other forums both within and outside the United Nations. As the most recent example, I can cite the statement of 10 November by the Prime Ministers of the Nordic countries expressing their strong support for the Secretary-General's programme of reforms and emphasizing that it provides a unique opportunity to transform the United Nations.

In dealing with this agenda item, the General Assembly has broken new ground. By adopting the format of open-ended informal consultations of the plenary, it has exercised its responsibilities with a sense of pragmatism and respect for democratic procedures. Individual delegations and groups of countries were able to express their views on the wide range of measures and proposals contained in the report. Suffice it to say that during the 12 meetings held in this novel negotiating format, there were almost 200 statements and interventions from delegations spanning the broad spectrum of the Assembly's membership.

The consultations also generated a fruitful dialogue with the Secretary-General and his representatives that helped to clarify and elaborate issues on which questions were raised and suggestions put forward. As a result, six addenda to the report have been issued. In addition, the Secretary-General's statement at the informal consultations as well as Secretariat responses to queries have now been released as official documents.

The draft resolution that we have before us is the result of a truly collective effort. Initiative, creativity and the diplomatic skills of individual delegations and representatives, combined with a serious and constructive

approach adopted by groups of States, has helped us to build a solid foundation for future progress.

Parallel to informal consultations of the plenary, I have been conducting — personally and through the Friends of the President, the Permanent Representatives of Brazil and Norway — extensive bilateral discussions with representatives of countries and groups of countries. I should like to stress the invaluable work carried out by Ambassadors Amorim and Biørn Lian, whose dedication and ability have been crucial to my endeavours and to whom I express my deep personal gratitude.

Another key factor in the success of our enterprise was the support and active involvement of several groups of States, among them the Group of 77, the Non-Aligned Movement and the European Union, whose Chairmen have played a vital role in promoting an agreement.

As we went about our business, we might not have made big headlines, but we certainly made headway towards building a consensus, in part through compromise, that essential instrument of multilateral diplomacy. In the process we have proven wrong the naysayers who often choose to see the Assembly's diversity as a drawback rather than as the valuable asset that it is. I think that this is an extremely important point to make, since there is sometimes a tendency to overlook the fact that the General Assembly is the most representative organ of the United Nations, comprising its entire membership. No less important, this main deliberative and legislative organ of the United Nations is a democratic institution, in which each member, big or small, rich or poor, has a say and a vote.

Indeed, the degree to which the Assembly can reconcile individual concerns and interests in the name of a common goal that has unquestionable value for all can serve as a valuable yardstick for measuring the success of this body.

As we mark today the passing of an important milestone, we should not forget that there is still a rather long and arduous road ahead of us in our joint efforts to renew and revitalize the United Nations. There is no doubt in my mind that we can get there successfully if we continue to work together in the same admirable spirit of cooperation and goodwill that has so far been the hallmark of our deliberations on United Nations reform.

I understand that the Secretary-General wishes to make a statement, and I invite him to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: Today is an important moment in the history of the United Nations. The draft resolution that you, the members of this Assembly, are about to adopt affirms that the General Assembly and the Secretary-General are working in partnership to bring about the quiet revolution that I announced on 16 July. Together we can transform the United Nations, renewing it for a new era and ensuring thereby that it retains a central role in advancing the principles of the Charter and the interests of people everywhere.

We will succeed in this endeavour because we must succeed. Now more than ever, the world needs a revitalized United Nations. The concept of our common fate on this planet has long since moved from the realm of abstract ideas to that of everyday practical reality. The United Nations is the only universal institutional expression of that common fate. Accordingly, we are obligated, to ourselves and to successor generations, to make it work as effectively and efficiently as we know how.

Your debate these past few weeks has been both useful and constructive in facilitating the adoption of a consensus resolution. I have welcomed your queries and suggestions concerning the implementation of my programme of actions, and I will, of course, fully take them into account as I proceed.

Mr. President, all of us owe you our deepest gratitude for your innovative and judicious guidance of these deliberations. We are also indebted to the two "Friends of the President", the Permanent Representatives of Brazil and of Norway, who worked indefatigably with you throughout the consultations and negotiations.

The actions that reside within my own jurisdiction are one component part of the overall reform package. We must now move forward expeditiously with the rest. My representatives and I look forward to continuing to work with the General Assembly.

The position of Deputy Secretary-General is an essential element of my proposed revamping of the leadership and management structure of the Secretariat. So too are the staffing and funding proposals that round out my restructuring efforts.

The development dividend and multi-year funding for operational activities reinforce the Organization's commitment to our core objective of development.

By means of the proposed ministerial commission on the specialized agencies, the United Nations can achieve greater system-wide coherence and impact in meeting new challenges. The Millennium Assembly, to which the ministerial commission would report, together with the Millennium People's Assembly, affords the entire international community the opportunity to articulate a strategy of multilateral cooperation for the century ahead.

A new, results-based budgeting system is essential to move us beyond the constraints and rigidities of micromanagement. It will provide Member States with the accountability they need and deserve while giving the Secretariat the flexibility required to achieve its mandates in the most cost-effective manner.

Mechanisms to focus the Assembly's deliberations and to regularly update its agenda, coupled with the introduction of sunset provisions for new mandates, will enhance the responsiveness and dynamism of the Assembly as the Organization's highest and most representative legislative body.

Other of my recommendations address the severe cash-flow problem of the Organization, and propose institutional refinements to strengthen the performance of the Organization in the areas of disarmament, humanitarian affairs, political affairs, peacekeeping, public information and the rationalization of the subsidiary machinery of the Economic and Social Council.

On 22 September, I called on you, the members of the General Assembly, to make this the Reform Assembly. Today, we have together taken a major step in that direction. Let us now continue our efforts and complete the job by the end of this Assembly session.

The President: I wish to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.17.

By adopting this draft resolution, the General Assembly would in part affirm its determination to strengthen the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations and thus improve its performance in order to realize the full potential of the Organization. The Assembly would commend the efforts and initiatives of the Secretary-General aimed at reforming the United Nations, and it would call upon the Secretary-General, while implementing the actions described in his report, to take full account of the views and comments expressed by Member States and groups of Member States.

Among other provisions, the General Assembly would stress that the actions would be implemented with full respect for the relevant mandates, decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly, including in particular the Medium-Term Plan for the period 1998-2001. It would also decide to continue the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General.

I would like now to draw the attention of members to one minor technical amendment to draft resolution A/52/L.17. I would also like to inform members that, as discussed yesterday during the informal consultations on agenda item 157, with regard to paragraph 2 of draft resolution A/52/L.17, the papers expressing the views of Member States which have been communicated to me are being transmitted to the Secretary-General with a covering letter of the President of the General Assembly.

This covering letter will be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under the symbol A/52/664. Accordingly, you are asked to add this symbol in footnote 5 at the bottom of the second page of draft resolution A/52/L.17, where reference is already made to documents A/52/661, A/52/662 and A/52/663. This was agreed yesterday and has been confirmed during this plenary meeting.

Before we proceed to take action on the draft resolution, I shall first call upon those representatives who wish to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): This Assembly is about to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.17 entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" on the actions of the Secretary-General which you yourself, Sir, have introduced. On this solemn occasion, my delegation wishes to express to you, Sir, its sincere thanks for the substantial efforts you have made in order to reach this successful conclusion of our deliberations. I would also like to express my profound appreciation to the two "Friends of the President", the Permanent Representatives of Norway and Brazil, who, beyond question, have given you valuable assistance.

The Member States have also made a constructive contribution, which enables us to adopt by consensus a text noteworthy for its balanced content which at the same time conveys a clear and firm message of support to the Secretary-General for the implementation of the reform measures he has initiated.

It is in a fully receptive and constructive spirit that my delegation, which has always been in favour of the revitalization and renewal of our Organization, has actively participated in the open-ended informal consultations of the plenary on this agenda item relating to the reform of the United Nations. Moreover, my delegation is entirely ready today to join in the consensus for the adoption of this draft resolution.

Allow me, on this occasion, to express my country's immense interest in the implementation of the reform measures with regard to questions such as disarmament, development, human rights, humanitarian assistance, preventive action and the involvement of civil society in the activities of our Organization. The implementation of the reform measures must, as the draft resolution so opportunely affirms, take place within the specific framework of the mandates, decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly, and with full respect for the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, in particular rule 153, and the Financial Regulations and Rules of the Organization.

My delegation also wishes to stress that the comments and positions voiced by the various regional groups and other groupings of Member States in the consultations on this issue constitute the essential points of reference for the implementation of the reform measures.

Algeria also supports this draft resolution because it gives Member States the opportunity openly to show their support for the Secretary-General while paying due attention to the implementation stage. In this respect, my delegation is pleased that, through the submission by the Secretary-General of a report on the implementation of the reform measures at its next session, the General Assembly will be fully informed of the stage reached in applying the measures.

Lastly, my delegation believes that this complementarity — this association, this synergy — that is taking shape between the General Assembly and the Secretary-General is the best formula for success in the reform process. It is also the best image that the United Nations can put forward to the international community as a resolute and solemn expression of the will that drives us all to join in reforming the Organization in order to renew it as an instrument capable of meeting the challenges of the coming millenium.

Mr. Valencia Rodríguez (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation wishes to extend its thanks to you, Sir, for your efforts in guiding the informal consultations of the plenary which have led to the submission of the draft resolution we are now considering, which appears in document A/52/L.17. I also wish to express our gratitude to the Chairmen of the Group of 77 and China and of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), to both of which my country belongs, for the diligence they have shown in their coordination efforts to arrive at this result. My gratitude is also extended to the Ambassadors of Brazil and Norway, the two "Friends of the President".

My delegation, which played an active part in the informal consultations in the plenary, wishes to express its full support for this draft resolution. In so doing, we would like to highlight the following aspects contained or referred to in that document: first, the reference to the purposes and principles of the Charter, which are the irreplaceable foundations on which the work of our Organization is based; secondly, respect for the rules governing functions and competence of the General Assembly and, hence, the financial and administrative norms, all of which must be fully complied with; thirdly, the need for the Secretary-General's proposals to be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for 1998-1999; fourthly, the authorization for the Secretary-General to implement the actions described in his report, taking account of the views and comments expressed by Member States and groups of States; fifthly, the need to respect the relevant General Assembly mandates, decisions and resolutions, including in particular the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001; and, sixthly, the recognition of the authority of the Secretary-General, the highest administrative official in this Organization, and the head of one of the principal organs of the United Nations, the Secretariat — a recognition that reflects the confidence placed by the Member States in this top-ranking official.

Consequently, my delegation agrees that this draft resolution should be adopted by this formal plenary without a vote.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): The action that we are taking today on the Secretary-General's report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" marks an important step in our collective efforts to inject greater relevance into our Organization. Self-examination and reform are essential elements of an ongoing process which will not only help us adjust to the changes in the world more than 50 years down the line, but also, and perhaps more importantly, enable us to face the

challenges of a tomorrow in which the changes and developments will be even more dramatic.

My delegation would like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for the dedicated efforts which have been made by him, and under his stewardship, and the courageous vision with which he has sought to concretize his proposals for reform.

Reform is never easy, partly because it implies change and therefore a departure from the hallowed physical principle of inertia, and partly because in the unbalanced world in which we live reform is not always of equal and mutual benefit to all. There is always the temptation to use reform in order to advance the narrow political interests of the few, or to demean it as a conditionality for the fulfilment of contractual obligations which have not always been met with the same commitment as the exercise on reform itself.

It is, therefore, necessary to be absolutely clear as to the real objectives of reform. In the first place, reform has to strengthen the Organization's capacity to deliver on the promise of the Charter. Our goal is the more efficient realization of its greater democratization, and a restoration of the primacy of the role of the United Nations in development. We strive to correct global disparities and injustice, to uphold principles of collective weal and to further peace and prosperity for all.

The strengthening of the leadership capacity of the United Nations should be aimed at enhancing the Organization's capacity to implement the programmes and activities mandated by Member States. Reform cannot be confounded with downsizing, even less with a downsizing in which lower-level personnel are eliminated while the top-heavy, inverted pyramid of a resource-short Organization is simultaneously expanded.

The primary responsibility for reform rests upon Member States, on us, for this is our Organization. If reform has been so slender, despite the consideration which has been given to it over the past two years, it is because the fault is ours, and not in our stars. That is why we would like to render tribute to you, too, Mr. President, for the great assiduity and commitment with which you, personally, have chaired the lengthy and difficult negotiations in the informal consultations over the past several weeks, and the success that you have achieved. Were it not for that leadership, and the support of your friends, we would not have reached the stage that we are at today.

It is important to point out that all reform efforts have to be undertaken strictly within the overall framework of mandates provided by Member States. It is those mandates, determined by Member States sitting together, which define not only the parameters for the activities of this Organization, but also the reference points for advanced and strategic planning. There can be no question of attempting to shift the centre of gravity for decision-making on mandates out of the hands of Member States. It is for the Member States to determine and ensure the strategic coherence and direction in the work of the Organization, just as it is for the Secretariat to ensure the best possible servicing and the timely submission of documentation and reports which would enable the Member States to do so.

If we have had so much difficulty during the course of our informal deliberations, it is because several of the proposals described as "actions" in the Secretary-General's report implied changes in mandates, or an extension beyond the powers of the Secretary-General as defined in Article 97 of the Charter.

It has emerged from the lengthy consultations that these are not the views of Pakistan alone, but that they are widely shared, as was only to be expected. That is why we are happy to see the improvements that have been agreed to in redefining the parameters of some of the action proposals. Of particular concern in this context was the proposal of the Secretary-General on disarmament, which is a complex and sensitive issue, cutting across mandates, with programmatic implications, financial implications and reporting requirements, as well as the overall servicing requirements of a negotiation process which is essentially Geneva-based.

The Secretary-General's proposals recognized the complexity of the issue, and correctly classified it under different headings because of its cross-cutting nature. If so much effort had to be expended in pointing out some of the flaws and inconsistencies described in that part relating to disarmament which came under what was described as Action 6, it was because of this very fact. The mandates for United Nations activities in the domain of disarmament fundamentally flow from the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, whose validity remains unquestioned and unquestionable, until and unless any change in them is agreed in the next special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. That is why the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, which was adopted by consensus in this very house less than a year ago, and which

constitutes the principal policy directive of the United Nations for the next three years, clearly defines in its programme 26 the framework for the Organization's activities in the field of disarmament in accordance with the agreed mandates. That is why, again, we felt as strongly as we did that any strengthening, if needed, should take place in Geneva, where the centre of gravity on disarmament lies, in the Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament that we have.

In this context we highly appreciate the fact that the Secretary-General has responded to the persistent reasoning by the Member States, and has modified his original proposal contained in Action 6. He has clearly stated that he is mindful of and has full respect for the guidelines laid down in the medium-term plan and the existing legislation on the programmatic content of the work of the substantive entities, as well as the financial rules and regulations of the Organization. The new Department, he has further stated, will be called, as mandated, *vide* resolution 37/99K, the Department for Disarmament Affairs. We note with satisfaction that the reference to arms regulation has been dropped, and that the programmatic aspects of the Department will be considered in conjunction with the related recommendation. The financial aspects and the matters pertaining to upgrading have been submitted to and will be considered by the Fifth Committee in conformity with rule 153 of our rules of procedure, a cardinal principle which we should all scrupulously abide by. We understand that this examination will be done with full regard for the overall emphasis on personnel reduction in the Organization.

We pay a warm tribute in this regard to the Secretary-General for his sagacity, political wisdom and receptivity to the views of Member States in pursuing the process of United Nations reform.

As agreed in the informal consultations, we have requested you, Mr. President, to formally transmit our views on Action 6, as well as on other actions contained in the report [A/51/950], as part of the official communication that you will send to the Secretary-General, with the appropriate document reference number to which you referred in your introduction, so that he takes them fully into account while implementing his proposals.

Our Organization stands at the crossroads of history on the eve of a new millennium. We all need to rededicate ourselves to the fundamental purposes and principles defined in the Charter, whose validity remains as potent today as when they were originally drafted by the founding fathers of the Organization. Pakistan is happy that we have all agreed on the text of a draft resolution which will move us further along the path of strengthening the Organization in the achievement of its goals. We share the satisfaction of all other Member States at this decisive moment.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of the Republic of Cuba wishes to acknowledge the efforts of the Secretary-General aimed at strengthening and revitalizing the role of the United Nations. We also wish to acknowledge the personal contribution made by you, Mr. President, and of the Ambassadors of Brazil and Norway in the discussion and negotiation of this proposal.

The role of the Chairmen of the Group of 77 and China and of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has been significant in presenting the positions of those groups of countries, to which Cuba is honoured to belong.

Cuba has defended and defends today the urgent need for a thorough reform of the United Nations.

It is not a matter of supporting reform for the sake of reform but, rather, of supporting a reform aimed at making the United Nations truly democratic, at re-establishing in its practices the principles of the Charter which, notwithstanding their total validity and relevance, are, in this unipolar era, undermined or reinterpreted to serve political interests.

We must uphold in every action the sovereign equality of States and eradicate privileges and anachronisms that are incompatible with equality and democracy among nations, such as the veto.

We must make the Security Council participatory, transparent in its methods and democratic in its procedures, and we must ensure that it represents and serves Member States and not merely a small group of them.

The reform should serve to restore the authority of the General Assembly, frequently usurped or diminished by the Security Council.

We must establish the problems of development, which is a fundamental human right, as the true priority

of the United Nations system, and ensure the necessary resources.

We must promote the full exercise of all human rights by all men and women, promoting their universality, interdependence and non-selectivity and avoiding harmful political manipulation.

We must resolve the financial problems of the Organization on the basis of timely, full and unconditional payment of assessed contributions, drawing a distinction between those who are truly victims and whose economies do not allow them to pay on time and the political conditions set by the principal debtor.

Our delegation hopes that the Secretary-General's proposal will help us make progress, and we are thankful for his assurances that the views expressed by Member States will be taken duly into account.

The delegation of Cuba will join the consensus in favour of the draft resolution before us, in order to make its most constructive and flexible contribution to this complex process promoting the use of consensus.

This is not the draft resolution we would have liked, nor can we consider the process that has led us to it a model. The instrumentation of some of the elements of the actions proposed has been hasty, preceding the very existence of the draft resolution. We believe that some of the actions have not taken into account the relevant General Assembly legislative mandates, its resolutions and decisions, and there are even contradictions with the medium-term plan for 1998-2001, which the Assembly adopted by consensus.

We feel that some of the actions unduly impinge on the authority of the General Assembly. The Group of 77 and China and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries have submitted numerous proposals and raised many questions that could have been better taken into account.

In the case of our delegation, we must express serious reservations on actions 5, 6, 10 (b), 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 20, and we repeat that a number of our questions have not been answered or were not given sufficient clarification.

In fact, were we in full compliance with rule 153 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure, we should not be meeting here without the Fifth Committee having taken a position on the financial and programme implications of the draft resolution. We have been told that this is an exception, but in my delegation's view this should not have occurred because in fact there is no legitimate reason for it, nor should it be invoked in the future as a precedent.

We will oppose any attempt to restrict the mandate of the Fifth Committee. It is curious, as well as regrettable, that we are taking decisions on such serious matters without having devoted a single minute to their discussion in an open meeting of the General Assembly.

I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for your decision to send to the Secretary-General the views expressed by groups of States and Member States in the course of our informal consultations. My delegation fully trusts that its views, officially submitted to the President of the General Assembly before this meeting, will be forwarded officially to the Secretary-General in the appropriate document, and we express our full confidence that the Secretary-General will take due account of them.

The Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly can and will be able to rely on the constructive and flexible contribution of our delegation both in considering the pending aspects of actions that will require the consensus of Member States as well as in the meticulous and responsible negotiation of the recommendations that have been drafted, in the hope and need of achieving true consensus.

Mr. Ovia (Papua New Guinea): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your efforts and those of your friends during this exercise. I would also like, through you, to pay tribute to the Secretary-General in his attempt to enhance the overall efficiency of the United Nations and to prepare it for the challenges of the twenty-first century. He unveiled a package of extensive and far-reaching reforms that call for bold and drastic policy, institutional and financial changes.

From the outset, also, I would like to say that we join the consensus on this draft resolution. I would also like to congratulate the Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania, on behalf of the Group of 77, and the Ambassador of Colombia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, on the diligent work they have undertaken in this exercise. Their statements, and the points and queries they have raised, must be taken fully into account in the implementation of the reforms.

Having said that, I would also like to make some points on the draft resolution. The draft resolution before

us today is an important and well-crafted document. It has taken weeks of negotiations. As stated by the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement and the European Union, the draft resolution is admittedly not as comprehensive or as exhaustive as it might have been and is lacking in some aspects. In fact, I would like to add that it is fairly vague in some parts but that it continues one positive and general thrust given earlier by Heads of Government and Foreign Ministers during the general debate in the Assembly, and which we all support.

With this background, today's draft resolution is a reaffirmation of the political message that we are now sending out to the international community. Papua New Guinea, as a member of both the Group of 77 and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, has joined the consensus, despite our own — and perhaps some other smaller delegations' — difficulties in trying to appreciate fully and participate constructively in the process owing to the peculiarities of the size of our delegations.

As our delegation stated in the informal working group on the reform of the General Assembly, we would have preferred a longer time-frame for these difficult issues and a more thorough discussion of issues. Be that as it may, we have joined the consensus, and I would only like to express our sincere hope that the draft resolution is well understood by the Secretariat and that there are no difficulties or ambiguities in its implementation. I would also like to express the hope that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee, which are discussing the financial implications of the draft resolution, will be making a clear decision to proceed and implement all the actions for the good of Member States, having clearly decided the priorities in the draft resolution.

However, in addition, it is my delegation's firm belief that this is the beginning of a new process and not an end in itself, and that any differences that we have on actions and, perhaps, the recommendations of the Secretary-General, as they relate to our countries and regions, will be continually and carefully discussed to suit our own particular situations before they are implemented. In other words, today's historic decision is seen by us not as an end in itself, but rather the beginning of a closer working relationship with the United Nations Secretariat and Organization when it relates to our international, regional and bilateral interests.

Finally, I would like to raise a continuing general concern of my delegation. We note that the reforms of the Secretary-General have made human rights issues a cross-sectoral issue. My delegation is wondering about the future of the issues on environment and sustainable development which were the focus of an international conference in Rio, the nineteenth special session of the United Nations General Assembly in June this year and the proposed conference in Kyoto on climate change.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): Mr. President, I thank you, once again, for this brief opportunity you are giving to my delegation. We are today, as Member States, at a crossroads whereby we are expected to take a decision, possibly a decision we hope will not haunt us in the future.

I am taking the floor with mixed feelings — mixed feelings not because I am against the draft resolution before us now, but simply because my delegation was labouring under the impression that when the President convened the General Assembly in the informal consultations, we were paving the way for us, as Member States, to be given enough opportunity to debate agenda item 157, which is about the report of the Secretary-General [A/51/950], whose energy in embarking upon the exercise to reform the United Nations we appreciate.

We are, as a delegation, disappointed to note that we have spent hardly a day to formally consider such a report by the chief executive of the United Nations, especially since it is the report that is going to affect the welfare of the Members of the United Nations.

My delegation only wishes and prays that, in the process, Almighty God will intervene with his tender mercies, so that in the future our children will not accuse us of having rushed such an important task assigned to us. I would, however, be remiss in my duty if I did not acknowledge the efforts made by the Secretary-General and the desire to see a reformed United Nations. It is our hope that the reformed United Nations will continue to be guided by the Charter on which it was founded, so that the dream of the founders of the United Nations does not become a fiasco.

It is our hope, again, that the membership of the United Nations will continue to be the Members as defined in the Charter. My delegation would not subscribe to a United Nations that would, in the future, diminish the role and the ownership of this Organization, as it belongs to the Members of the United Nations. It is our hope that United Nations reform will make Member

States feel proud, although, as I indicated earlier, I would have hoped for a week to be given for the membership to debate this report as we have done, indeed, with other reports by the Secretary-General, for instance, the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It took us the whole day and yet, in value, that report does not supersede this report by the Secretary-General.

Since the Secretary-General is with us this evening, allow me to encourage him in his effort to build the walls of the United Nations, which may be falling as we are talking. But he needs to be cautious and ensure that, in the future, he remains the hero who rebuilt the walls of the United Nations.

I pray and hope that non-governmental organizations, under the reform process that is about to be completed, will remain answerable to the Economic and Social Council, as stipulated in the Charter, and that Member States will, through their Governments, continue to influence the course and hammer out the destiny of the United Nations, as enshrined in the Charter.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.17.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.17?

Draft resolution A/52/L.17 was adopted (resolution 52/12).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their position on the resolution that has just been adopted.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this formal meeting of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.17, mandating the Secretary-General to implement various actions contained in his report, "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform", document A/51/950 of 14 July 1997. This is an important stage in the process of consideration of the Secretary-General's reform proposals, which began on 8 October. In this regard, I should like to express to you, Sir, the deep appreciation and congratulations of the Group of 77 and China for your proven able leadership and diplomatic skills in guiding the deliberations of the reform consultations under very challenging circumstances.

We all acknowledge that the proposals for reform contained in resolution 50/227 and the Secretary-General's report represent a significant contribution to the ongoing debate on how to modernize the Organization and improve its operations. This view was underscored by the Foreign Ministers of the Group of 77 in their ministerial Declaration of 26 September 1997 and in the statements of the leaders of delegations in the general debate at this session. In particular, our leaders welcomed the reform process and commended the Secretary-General's efforts and initiatives aimed at reforming the United Nations.

When the debate on United Nations reform began in earnest under agenda item 157 delegations were rather cautious, particularly on how to discuss the Secretary-General's report on reform. Eventually, we all agreed to go along with the methodology of considering the actions first, and dealing with recommendations thereafter. During the informal consultations the Group of 77 and China tabled two important documents, on 14 October 1977 and 29 October 1997, respectively, containing the Group's position on the Secretary-General's reform proposals. In the same vein, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Group of 77 and the NAM, tabled our position on those recommendations and actions which fall within their mandate.

Draft resolution A/52/L.17, which we have just adopted by consensus, was arduously negotiated. It tried to accommodate the different positions of Member States. In this context, the Group of 77 and China decided to join the consensus position on this resolution, even though it does not fully reflect all our concerns as expressed during the negotiations, in order to facilitate the reform process. We are, however, encouraged to note that it contains useful elements that can cover some of our concerns when the measures are implemented. Paragraph 2, for example, specifically calls upon the Secretary-General, when implementing the actions described in his report, to take full account of the views and comments expressed by Member States and groups of Member States. In this context, I can hardly overemphasize the concerns of the developing countries, as expressed by the Group of 77, the NAM and their Joint Coordinating Committee. For, after all, the reforms will have a direct impact on developing countries.

The Group of 77 and China further attach great importance to the parts of the resolution which stress that the implementation of the reform measures should be in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and should respect fully the relevant mandates, decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly including, in particular, the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. Furthermore, the financial implications of the reform proposals should be considered in the context of the rules and regulations of the Organization.

With those safeguards and understanding, the Group of 77 and China support the implementation of the actions contained in the Secretary-General's report.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Group of 77 and China for the unwavering support and solidarity that facilitated the achievement we are witnessing today. In the same vein, I would like to express our group's appreciation for the good work of Ambassador Amorim of Brazil and Ambassador Biørn Lian of Norway, the facilitators on behalf of the President. I wish also to recognize the cooperation and counsel of the Secretary-General and his advisers in the executive unit on reform. Their contribution is appreciated.

Last but not least, the Group of 77 and China look forward to the next stage of our deliberations on the reform proposals.

Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries which are members of the European Economic Area, namely, Iceland and Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

I would like to begin by saying how much we welcome the General Assembly's adoption by consensus today of a resolution expressing the approval of Member States for the actions contained in the Secretary-General's programme for reform.

We have thus completed the examination of measures by the Assembly during the last few weeks. The comments made by many delegations and the explanations provided by the Secretariat have enabled us to clarify a number of aspects that needed to be elucidated and to reply to the questions raised by certain Member States.

This dialogue has enabled us to bring the views of the various delegations even closer together and has created conditions that now put the General Assembly in a position to give its support to the action undertaken by the Secretary-General.

The European Union welcomes the Assembly's solemn declaration of its support for the message conveyed and the choices made by the Secretary-General in the programme of reforms he submitted to us last 16 July, and the mandate that it gives to the Secretary-General, as the chief administrative officer of the Organization, to implement the measures contained in his report.

The time has come for our Assembly to give international public opinion the positive signal that it has been awaiting and to show that the Assembly is serious about the ambitious reform exercise that it has undertaken, which should help to make our Organization more efficient and effective in carrying out the tasks entrusted to it by the Member States.

The message we wish to convey is twofold message. On the one hand, it is a matter of telling the Secretary-General that we approve of the reform that he is undertaking on his own authority and of showing him that his action has the support of the Member States. On the other hand, we are drawing the Secretary-General's attention to a number of comments made by delegations during the fruitful discussions we have just held. The Secretary-General might well wish to take these comments into account when he implements the measures contained in his programme.

The comments made by the European Union on the substance of the actions contained in the reform programme will be transmitted to the Secretary-General in accordance with operative paragraph 2 of the resolution just adopted.

Once that stage has been completed, we will then be able to continue, in the same spirit of conscientious dialogue, to examine the recommendations proposed to us in the Secretary-General's programme.

Let me end by expressing our appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to the co-Chairmen, the Ambassadors of Ireland and Viet Nam, and in particular to the

facilitators, Ambassador Celso Amorim of Brazil and Ambassador Hans Jacob Biørn Lian of Norway, for your invaluable contributions to the productive outcome of our discussions.

Mr. Londoño-Paredes (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Non-Aligned Movement has participated actively during the past few weeks in the numerous informal consultations and meetings held in order to consider the actions described by the Secretary-General in his report to this Assembly on the reform of the Organization.

During that lengthy process, the 113 countries of the Non-Aligned Movement acted in a positive and open spirit to consider reforms and essential proposals to achieve our common objective of improving the functioning of the Organization. In supporting resolution 52/12, the Non-Aligned Movement wishes to recognize the excellent work carried out under your guidance, Mr. President, and the extraordinary activities carried out by the Ambassadors of Brazil and Norway as facilitators of the negotiating process. Similarly, we wish to express our thanks to our colleagues in the Non-Aligned Movement for their support throughout this process, as well as to our friends and colleagues of the Group of 77, with whom we worked in close cooperation in the joint coordinating committee. We hope that, as stipulated by this resolution, full account will be taken of the opinions and views expressed by the Movement. In this context, the Non-Aligned Movement is prepared to continue the work that we have before us.

Mr. Awaad (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to affirm the solidarity of the delegation of Egypt with the two statements made by the Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Ambassador of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement. Allow me also to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your persistent efforts that have led today to our adoption of this resolution by consensus. We hope that this will be an affirmation of our determination as Member States to strengthen and develop our Organization, with a view to supporting its role in the international arena and to the enhancement of its capabilities and effectiveness in responding to the requirements of its members.

Allow me also to extend thanks to the Secretary-General for his efforts to reform the Organization. I would also like to congratulate him on the Member States' support for his reform actions. I would also like to thank him for his response to the numerous concerns raised by the Member States during the process of consultations, and also for the numerous clarifications he submitted in response to requests by the Member States during this process. We hope that this latter practice will continue throughout his stewardship of the Organization.

The delegation of Egypt shares the understanding affirmed by the Secretary-General in his statement at the informal consultations of the General Assembly on 4 November. This statement was included in document A/52/585, which we view as an integral part of the reform proposals of the Secretary-General regarding the administrative and organizational nature of the actions, the commencement of which the Assembly today endorsed.

In this context, we also welcome the affirmation by the Secretary-General in the same statement of his full respect for the guidelines in the context of which these actions will be implemented. This is clearly affirmed by the resolution the Assembly has just adopted, and on which we were pleased to join the consensus.

The delegation of Egypt looks forward to continued consideration by the General Assembly of the reform proposals recommended by the Secretary-General in his report, including any programme implications of any relevance to these recommendations. We would like to assure the Assembly that the delegation of Egypt will continue to cooperate and participate constructively and actively during this ongoing process to reform the Organization.

Mr. Albin (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation participated actively in the negotiating and consultation process that led to the consideration of the resolution that the General Assembly has just adopted.

Mexico wishes to reaffirm its commitment to and support for the United Nations reform process. We reiterate our recognition and gratitude to the Secretary-General for his initiative and efforts to that end. I also wish to express our thanks to you, Sir, and to the Permanent Representatives of Brazil and Norway, for the patience and devotion they have invested in this matter.

The delegation of Mexico fully recognizes the role and competence of the Secretary-General, as the highest-ranking official of the Secretariat, to take measures aimed at strengthening the Secretariat's ability to respond to new mandates and challenges. There can be no doubt that

the improved efficiency and efficacy of the Secretariat will benefit the work of the Organization as a whole.

Following the adoption resolution 52/12, it is now up to the Member States, in the framework of the General Assembly's authority, to consider in the appropriate forum the programmatic and financial implications of the measures proposed. Of course, this is technical work whose purpose is to assure financial viability, on the one hand, and programmatic consistency, on the other, in accordance with the terms established in the resolution itself.

The delegation will continue to participate actively in the consideration of the Secretary-General's report. In that regard, I wish to point out — and in this we share the views expressed a few moments ago by the Secretary-General — that we feel that the next phase should consider, on a priority basis, the recommendations whose implementation has financial implications. In this way, they can be considered, if need be, in due course before negotiations finish on the proposed programme budget for the next biennium.

Mr. Biørn Lian (Norway): The General Assembly has now adopted a resolution that gives an important political signal to the international community that there is a will and a way to reform the United Nations. The Member States have come together and have clearly affirmed that they are determined to strengthen the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations in order to make the Organization better equipped to face the challenges of the next century.

It was only in July this year that the Secretary-General challenged the Member States by submitting the most comprehensive plan for change in the history of the United Nations. Today, the General Assembly has responded by giving the Secretary-General a vote of confidence. By this resolution, we welcome the Secretary-General's report and commend his efforts and initiatives aimed at reforming the United Nations. In plain language, we support the reform actions he is undertaking and thereby in effect urge him to carry on.

As you mentioned in your opening remarks, Sir, the Nordic Prime Ministers stated two days ago their strong support for the Secretary-General's programme of reforms and emphasized that it provides a unique opportunity to reform the United Nations.

My own Government has on several occasions expressed its full support for wide-ranging reform of the United Nations and for the reform initiatives taken by the Secretary-General. We view his reform programme as a contribution to improving the coordination and efficiency of the United Nations. My Government firmly believes that these initiatives will strengthen the ability of the United Nations to fulfil the purposes and principles of the Charter and the aspirations and needs of the Member States. We strongly believe that these initiatives are in the interest of the membership as a whole, not only of a privileged few.

The resolution we have adopted today is the result of informal consultations in which a large number of delegations participated. Delegations raised questions and made comments on the proposed actions. The Secretary-General himself and his representatives in the Secretariat have given full and frank answers and have thus provided essential clarification. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretariat, represented by Mr. Strong and Mr. Stoby, for the professional and responsible approach they have demonstrated throughout the process.

I have no doubt that the dialogue we have had has cleared away the doubts some delegations had at the outset. If some hesitation still lingers, it is of course important that the Secretary-General himself has ensured us that he will take full account of the views and comments made by Member States in his implementation of the actions. This spirit of cooperation that we have seen must now be transferred to the next phase of our deliberations as we proceed to continue the discussions on the recommendations. We are hopeful that the momentum marked by today's decision will enable us, in the words of the Secretary-General, to "move forward expeditiously" in order to conclude this task successfully before the end of this session.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank the representatives of Luxembourg, the United States and Colombia for their support and to pay a special tribute to the representative of Tanzania, whose graceful patience and skill in representing close to 130 Member countries contributed greatly to the result the Ambassador of Brazil and I, as facilitators, strove to obtain.

As a final point, I would like to thank you, Sir, for your personal dedication and efforts guiding us to a successful conclusion of this phase of our reform efforts.

Mr. Fowler (Canada): I am pleased to be able to make the following statement on behalf of Australia, New Zealand and Canada (the CANZ Group).

An organization's ability to evolve in order to be able to continue to carry out its mandate in a constantly shifting environment is the true test of its strength and stability and will very directly determine its longevity. The consensus resolution we have just adopted on "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform" is a significant milestone in the Organization's evolutionary process and will help to equip the United Nations to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

We wish to congratulate you, Sir, for making this achievement possible. We also wish to express our sincerest gratitude to the Ambassadors of Brazil and Norway, whose tireless efforts helped bring about this consensus. Most importantly, however, we wish to pay homage to the wisdom and foresight of Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his reform team for proposing a programme of action which restructures the Organization, making it more vital and relevant, while ensuring that it remains deeply sensitive to the views of 185 Member States.

We believe that this resolution sends a powerful message to the world. It says that the States Members of the United Nations fully support the evolutionary reform process of Secretary-General Annan. It represents a clear endorsement of the actions contained in the Secretary-General's report, "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform". It signals our confidence in the Secretary-General, in his new management group and in the ability of the United Nations to adapt to and meet our collective needs in the coming millennium.

As we consider the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's Track-2 paper, the members of the CANZ Group urge all Member States to bend every effort to nurture and maintain a constructive approach to the reform challenge. A more efficient and effective Organization can only be to our common benefit. We owe it to our imaginative and committed Secretary-General to give him the backing he needs to succeed in this complex but absolutely vital endeavour. Let us continue to signal to the world that the United Nations is strong, is stable, and is here to stay.

Mr. Cui Tiankai (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): There is a Chinese saying which goes: "A thousand-mile journey starts with the first step". The resolution just adopted by the General Assembly is the first step taken by the general membership in discussing and reviewing the report of the Secretary-General on reform [A/51/950 and Add.1-6]. It is, in a certain sense, also part of the efforts made by the United Nations to meet the challenges of the new century.

The Secretary-General submitted his extensive report on the reform of the United Nations just a few months after he took office. This has fully demonstrated his determination and commitment to promote reform. We appreciate his efforts in this regard.

The General Assembly, while dealing with numerous issues on its agenda, has seized every minute to consider actions contained in the report and has had a preliminary exchange of views on the recommendations. This has once again testified to the political will of the entire membership to reform the United Nations.

We are in favour of reforming the United Nations. The purpose of the reform is to strengthen the role of the United Nations and enhance its efficiency. Measures taken in this regard must reflect the common interests of all Member States and the results must be able to stand the test of time. To this end, we offer the following views.

First, United Nations reform is the shared cause of all Member States. It should allow full play to democracy, heed the voices of all sides and take into account the interests of various parties. At an earlier stage, Member States had meaningful dialogues with the Secretariat. Some problems were settled upon clarification. Though this practice is more time-consuming, it has brought more extensive and firmer support to the Secretary-General and should therefore be continued.

Secondly, United Nations reform should conform with the demand of the general membership and focus on the role and influence of the Organization in the next century. Therefore, it should accord greater attention to the question of development with a view to strengthening rather than weakening the functions of the Organization in promoting development in the economic and social areas. We have noted that the Secretary-General emphasized in his report, and many times in his statements, the importance of development. We hope that the Secretary-General's desire will become the common understanding of all Member States, that is, that development should be a cross-sector priority of the

United Nations and truly occupy an important position in all its undertakings.

Thirdly, United Nations reform should be a long-term and continuous process. It should be based on the relevant resolutions, decisions and mandates of the General Assembly and conform with the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant rules and regulations of the General Assembly. It should also try to obtain the widest support possible and seek gradual improvement. Should United Nations reform be relevant for only three to five years, the stability and continuity of the functions of the United Nations would inevitably be jeopardized. This would compromise not only the sound and smooth development of the reform, but also the ability of the United Nations to deal effectively with the challenges it is facing.

Fourthly, it must also be pointed out that the resolution adopted today on the actions described in the Secretary-General's report on reform should not prejudge our consideration of the recommendations on the final decisions. The financial and programmatic implications of the relevant actions should be considered by the relevant bodies. The practice of taking a decision on a question with financial implications without first submitting it to the relevant committee should be viewed as a special case, rather than a precedent that will have a negative impact on the future work of the General Assembly. The reasonable concerns raised by many Member States during earlier discussions of the report should be fully recognized. We hope that in the process of implementing the actions there will be continued consultations between the Secretary-General and Member States, and among Member States.

At the next stage, the General Assembly will begin its consideration of the recommendations, which involve major reform measures within the jurisdiction of Member States and call for careful and comprehensive study by the entire membership. We hope that the General Assembly will make proper arrangements for the next stage of the work to secure full participation by Member States — particularly the developing countries — in a democratic and transparent process, and ensure in-depth consideration of the important reform measures. We believe that, given your wisdom and experience, Sir, you will continue to guide the General Assembly to success.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The adoption this evening by the General Assembly of resolution 52/12 was the culmination of a period of its work that witnessed wide-ranging discussions and dialogue among various States on the reform plan submitted by the Secretary-General. I would like to point out in this regard that the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic has contributed to the various phases of this discussion, proceeding from our interest in enhancing the capacity of the United Nations to undertake the responsibilities assigned to it in order to fulfil the hopes pinned on the United Nations by our peoples as an international institution that coordinates the efforts of the international community and its Governments with a view to achieving peace, securing justice and guaranteeing sustainable economic development for all.

The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic highly appreciates the efforts made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, in preparing this plan. It also appreciates his constant responsiveness to the observations, views and proposals made by States and groups of States regarding the reform plan, the further clarifications of the contents of the plan that he provided, his respect of the views of these groups, and his pledge to take them into account in the future.

The delegation of Syria would also like to commend the efforts made by the various parties to arrive at resolution 52/12, especially those made by the Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania as the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, and the delegation of Colombia as the Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My delegation would also like to express its great appreciation for the tireless efforts of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Hennadiy Udovenko, and the Friends of the President, the Ambassadors of Brazil and Norway, for their unremitting efforts during all the informal meetings and during the intensive consultations to achieve consensus on this significant and strategic question.

The resolution that has just been adopted by consensus calls upon the Secretary-General, in operative paragraph 2, to take full account of the views and comments expressed by Member States while implementing the actions described in his report (A/51/950), and of the clarifications to that report and the statement made by the Secretary-General in the open-ended informal consultations of the plenary of the General Assembly on 4 November 1997.

My delegation would like to assert in this regard its full support for the views and comments expressed by the

States members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China on the Secretary-General's proposal for reform, and to express its full confidence that the Secretariat will take these observations into consideration because on the one hand they are objective and precise, and, on the other hand, they express the views and positions of 134 States Members of the United Nations and strengthen the Secretary-General's proposal for reform.

Without going into the details of the views expressed and proposals and observations made by our delegation during the various consultations, we would like to single out in particular the positions expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China in the following four areas.

First, regarding Action 6, my delegation feels that there should be the requisite political will on the part of the nuclear-weapon States in order to negotiate seriously on weapons of mass destruction, foremost among which are nuclear weapons, and that no measure for restructuring the Disarmament department should lead to dispersing the activities of the United Nations in this area. We also feel that it is necessary that the mandates, competences and programmes of action of the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission should not be compromised, as provided for by the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Secondly, with respect to Action 17, my delegation supports the objective analysis provided by the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement in this regard.

Thirdly, regarding Actions 14, 15 and 16, we also support the position expressed by the members of the Non-Aligned Movement on the measures relating to human rights. We feel that this should be dealt with as a separate question so as not to overlap with other United Nations activities, since such an integration would further politicize human rights questions in addition to exploiting them as a means to bring certain pressures to bear, such as intervening in the domestic affairs of States.

Fourthly, the delegation of Syria affirms the need to accord operative paragraph 3 due importance during implementation. We believe that full compliance with and commitment to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 is the best means to implement these actions, in addition to the full respect of the relevant mandates, decisions and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

In conclusion, we would like to confirm that in every action we take we must pay greater attention to the role of the United Nations in the field of enhancing international cooperation for development and that we should rule out any measures that would negatively affect the relevant programmes and activities of the Organization related to development and to the eradication of poverty in the developing countries and the least-developed countries.

Mr. Suamin (Indonesia): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your successful efforts, which have led to the consensus adoption of the resolution before us. My delegation is fully aware that such a consensus is reached only after lengthy consultations and painstaking negotiations such as the ones you have undertaken during the past few weeks. My delegation would like also to express its appreciation to the designated facilitators, Ambassador Amorim of Brazil and Ambassador Biørn Lian of Norway, for their untiring efforts in assisting you in finding common ground among delegations.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Tanzania, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, as well as with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Colombia on behalf of the non-aligned countries. We also hold the view that the resolution is not fully satisfactory to all delegations. However, considering that it reflects most of the elements that concern us and bearing in mind the need to send a clear signal to the international community on our firm commitment to the reform process, my delegation lends its support to the adoption of this resolution.

Allow me to highlight some elements that are of particular importance to my delegation. You have just pointed out, Sir, in your introductory remarks, that during the previous informal consultations, almost 200 delegations took the floor to express their views and comments. My delegation was among those who were privileged to contribute. This broad interest demonstrates the importance these delegations attach to this exercise. Against this background, we find it imperative that the Secretary-General, when implementing the actions, will take fully into account all views and comments, particularly those of the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement.

In this regard, we deem it necessary that the Secretary-General, in his report to the fifty-third session

of the General Assembly, really reflect the concern of Member States, which he clearly stipulated that he would in his statement of 4 November 1997. We are very pleased with the decision to continue consideration of the report of the Secretary-General within the framework of the current format.

Furthermore, Sir, my delegation is encouraged by the constructive debate that has been taking place in the informal consultations as well as by the way you have led the deliberations. It is our fervent hope that the principles of transparency and democracy will remain to guide us as we enter the next stage of the discussions and that a lot of time will be required to ensure that the proposals are soundly and thoughtfully addressed.

In the meantime, considering the fact that the next stage of the deliberations will focus considerably on the proposed recommendations, my delegation totally agrees with the Secretary-General that States Members of the United Nations will have a pertinent role to play, since they entirely deal with and fall within the prerogatives and jurisdiction of this body.

Furthermore, my delegation is most grateful to the Secretary-General for highlighting some important elements of his proposed recommendations in the statement he made just before the adoption of the resolution. In this context, to ensure progress in our exercise, close partnership and cooperation with the Secretariat is of critical importance, particularly to provide the Member States with additional clarification on the proposals in response to the comments and queries raised by various delegations.

Finally, Indonesia expresses its readiness to participate constructively in the detailed discussions in the next round of our deliberations.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): The adoption by consensus of resolution 52/12 on renewing the United Nations is an important milestone in the ongoing process of United Nations reform. It sends a clear political signal of the positive attitude of Member States towards the reform process. In the resolution Member States reaffirm, first and foremost, their determination to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of the United Nations through the reform process.

More specifically, Member States unanimously commend and endorse the efforts and initiative of the Secretary-General, Mr Kofi Annan, to that end.

On behalf of my delegation, I should like to express our sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to the facilitators, Ambassador Amorim and Ambassador Biørn Lian, for your tireless efforts to reach this consensus agreement.

The reform initiative of the Secretary-General focused on strengthening the leadership role of the Secretary-General and on coordination in each important field of United Nations activities: peace and security, development, economic and social affairs, human rights and humanitarian affairs. We warmly welcome these initiatives, since the establishment of a freely integrated interactive system that responds more effectively to the needs and aspirations of Member States is in the interest of all concerned.

While pushing reform efforts forward, Japan fully respects the judgement and prerogatives of the Secretary-General in discharging his managerial responsibilities so long as the implementation of measures under his authority is transparent, based on objective criteria and in conformity with policy guidance by Member States.

We are confident that the Secretary-General will take full account of the views and comments expressed by Member States, including my own, in implementing the actions contained in his report. It is also understood that the General Assembly will further examine the programme implications of relevant actions, including action 21, on the Development Account, to which my delegation attaches importance, at a later stage in its consideration of the issues.

At this stage, I should simply like to underline the importance my delegation attaches to action 18, on human resources, and to action 29.

The simplification of personnel policies, including those related to recruitment and promotion, is long overdue. Japan, as a seriously under-represented country whose nationals are as much as 50 per cent below the minimum desirable level among United Nations personnel, naturally attaches great importance to improving geographical representation. We look forward to the early establishment of a concrete plan to redress this situation.

In connection with action 29, my delegation agrees that the think-tank capacity of the United Nations should be enhanced through various measures, including integration of research and academic activities of the

United Nations University and other research institutes into the mainstream of United Nations operations. At the same time, every effort should be made to avoid duplication of activities among United Nations entities in this field.

Although the resolution we have just adopted is important, it represents but one stage in the process of considering the Secretary-General's important programme for reform.

We echo the Secretary-General's voice in saying that it is now incumbent upon Member States to move speedily to the next stage: the consideration of the recommendations contained in his report. We urge all Member States to tackle the issues vigorously and in the same constructive and cooperative spirit so that a conclusion can be reached as expeditiously as possible. We will then be able to proceed with our work of renewing the United Nations to ensure that it can respond to the expectations of the international community.

Mr. Peleg (Israel): Israel has followed the informal consultations on item 157, entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals", with great interest.

We believe that reform of the Organization is of paramount importance and that the programme outlined by the Secretary-General is sound and moves in the right direction.

Nevertheless, I take this opportunity to draw the attention of the General Assembly to a matter which is of grave concern to my Government. There is a constant repetition in this house, an almost mantra-like profession of the well-known formula regarding the equality of sovereign States — a concept spelt out explicitly in the Charter. It is claimed on an almost daily basis that this concept is at the heart of the United Nations. Would that it were so.

Israel cannot but view with increasing consternation a United Nations which proclaims its universality on a constant basis and yet, by virtue of a system of regional groups not contemplated by the founders of the Organization and nowhere noted in any official rule of procedure, continues to systematically exclude Israel from any meaningful role in the Organization.

We are well aware of the circumstances which gave rise to this situation. The formation of regional groups was indeed necessitated by the growth of the United Nations in the early 1960s. Israel should, by virtue of its geographical location, belong to the Asian Group. However, since Member States are accepted into this group on the basis of consensus, Israel cannot at this time be accepted into the Asian Group, as the objection of even one State is enough to ensure rejection. The result is that Israel is excluded from consideration in the election process in most United Nations bodies because it cannot at this time, for reasons beyond its control, join the geographical group to which it would normally belong.

Moreover, in the course of these informal consultations, great weight was given to the positions expressed by various groups of States in which Israel cannot participate.

I would remind the President of the lengthy colloquy which occurred just before the close of yesterday's informal meeting regarding statements that would be circulated as official documents of the Assembly. The clear preference shown for circulating statements of groups of States is a case of *res ipsa loquitur*, a matter which speaks for itself.

This is truly an injustice, and it does violence to the Charter in both the letter and the spirit. Moreover, this injustice is not an occurrence removed some thousands of miles from here in a remote corner of the world whose relevance to the United Nations might be a matter for debate. This injustice occurs right here in this building on a daily basis, and its remedies are well known.

In conclusion, the issue of United Nations reform is a matter of great interest beyond this Hall, as you, Mr. President, and the Secretary-General are surely cognizant.

The success of the reform proposals now before us will be judged not only by virtue of their financial efficacy and their organizational efficiency, but also on the basis of whether a modicum of fair play is finally enshrined in the procedures of the Organization.

Notwithstanding our reservations, Israel joined the consensus on this draft resolution.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): We would like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his firm commitment to the revitalization of the United Nations, and to you, Mr. President, for your leadership, which enabled us to adopt by consensus the draft resolution that was before us this evening. I also take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to the Permanent Representatives of Brazil and of Norway for their role in

producing the consensus text through their tireless consultations with Member countries.

We believe that it is both timely and appropriate for the General Assembly to take action which embodies the consensus view of Member States. It goes without saying that the process of reforming the United Nations is a formidable undertaking, but clearly one which all Member States must see through to the very end. So much depends upon our ability to forge ahead where consensus exists and to find common ground on tough issues.

As we all know perfectly well, the Secretary-General's reform package, based upon his determination to revitalize the United Nations, reflects countless hours of active deliberations both by Member States and by the Secretariat, mutual consultations, prudent evaluation and compromise. That is why my delegation has expressed its strong support for the reform proposals throughout the informal consultations of the whole. My delegation believes that this resolution is balanced and adequately addresses the various views and positions expressed by Member States during informal meetings, and that it also represents a very important step towards pushing forward the reform programme. Therefore, my delegation joined the consensus with full confidence.

With regard to the manner in which the Secretary-General's recommendations are to be dealt with, we believe that a sense of urgency needs to be injected into the deliberations on them, as we have done when discussing other actions. This is not only because of the importance and urgency of the Secretary-General's reform package, but is also because it would promote better public understanding of the United Nations reform effort now underway.

Finally, we believe that the adoption of this resolution sends an unequivocal message of support for the Secretary-General's historic proposals, and reaffirms our collective political commitment to create the most modern, efficient and responsive organization possible: a United Nations to meet effectively the myriad challenges of the decades ahead.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): First of all, Sir, let me commend your endurance: if commitment to reform can be measured by a capacity to sit through long debates, you are no doubt the number-one reformer of the Organization. May I also suggest that you might institute a medal for those of us who are still sitting here at this late stage.

I wish to express the satisfaction of my delegation with the important decision we have just taken. The Foreign Minister of Brazil, in his statement at the opening of the general debate, had already indicated the clear support of my country for the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to reform the United Nations. The adoption by consensus of this resolution on the actions the Secretary-General is undertaking or proposes to undertake is indeed a very positive signal on the part of the membership in relation to the need to adjust our Organization to present-day realities and to prepare it to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Since you have generously appointed me, Sir, along with Ambassador Biørn Lian of Norway, as a "Friend of the President", I must bear witness to the fact that all delegations participated in this exercise in a constructive spirit and contributed to the positive result achieved. I personally thank them for their cooperation and understanding. I would like to make special reference to the essential role played by the chairmen of the Group of 77, of the Non-Aligned Movement group and of the European Union group as consensus-builders within each of those groups and within the larger context of our consultations. I would also like to express appreciation to the Secretariat staff who helped us in our endeavours.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to you, Mr. President, for the tireless efforts and inexhaustible energy you are displaying as you lead this session of the General Assembly, which has rightly been called the Reform Assembly. Your good-natured remarks and inimitable sense of humour were fundamental in facilitating our tasks.

Mr. Asadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I take the floor on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran to reiterate with satisfaction our concurrence with the Assembly's action on the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.17. This is, overall, a balanced text. As is customary and expected in the United Nations and in multilateral diplomatic negotiations, it is a compromise text, and hence not an ideal one from our point of view.

The collective effort towards the reform of the Organization is a continuum for which the Secretary-General, his reform team, the entire membership of the Organization — the Canada-Australia-New-Zealand group, the Group of 77, the Non-Aligned Movement and the European Union — you, Sir, and the two "Friends of the President" deserve credit.

We have just concluded part of our work. Our collective enterprise will certainly continue. And let me assure you, Sir, that the active involvement, participation and sincere cooperation of my delegation with you in the framework of the informal consultations will continue in the second part of our joint journey.

Like other developing countries members of the Group of 77 that have already taken the floor, my delegation also has particular views on various actions recommended in the Secretary-General's report. Those views have been raised in detail in the course of the informal consultations, and are reflected in general in the position papers of the Group of 77. I do not intend now to go into our views — or, in some cases, our reservations. Rather, I shall merely lend support to the statement just made by the chairmen of the Group of 77 and the group of non-aligned countries. What they stated on behalf of those two major groups representing the South — the developing world — did indeed reflect and cover, in principle, our concerns. We look forward with anticipation to due consideration being given by the Secretary-General and by the Secretariat to the views and positions of the Group of 77 and of the Non-Aligned Movement while implementing these actions. We found the Secretary-General's words of assurance in his statement earlier in this meeting reassuring.

The President: The General Assembly will continue its consideration of agenda item 157 at a later stage.

The meeting rose at 8 p.m.